

Muslim leaders in Rafat
All maternity hospitals shut in Ukrainian city

KIEV (R) — Epidemic of violence has led to the closing of all maternity hospitals in the Ukrainian city of Kiev.

Archaeologists trace ancient link to Africa
WASHINGTON (R) — A study of the DNA of modern Africans has revealed that they are descended from a small group of people who lived in the Middle East about 100,000 years ago.

from
Dutch doctor convicted in euthanasia case

Spending on drugs has dropped in U.S.
WASHINGTON (R) — Spending on drugs in the United States has dropped significantly in the last few years, according to a new study.

rd Israel

PLO military court is 'temporary'
GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian chief negotiator Nabil Shaath said Saturday a Palestinian military court, criticised by Amnesty International, was temporary and a message to militants opposed to peace.

Treaty monitoring committee to meet
AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian-Israeli committee monitoring the implementation of the peace treaty that the Kingdom and the Jewish state signed in October meets in the Israeli town of Beit Shean today (Sunday) for a regular review of progress in negotiations on various sectoral agreements.

Americans distrust government, but disapprove of militias
NEW YORK (AFP) — In the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, a majority of Americans believe citizen militias are "dangerous" but also think the government is so big that it threatens personal freedom.

Rabbani forces claim advance
KABUL (AFP) — Forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani have made significant territorial gains in fighting against Taliban religious movement rivals in western Afghanistan, military officials said Saturday.

Air Algeria to buy new aircraft
TUNISIA (R) — Algeria's national carrier Air Algérie plans to buy new aircraft, the official Algerian news agency APS said on Saturday.

Stolen kiss takes conference by surprise
CAIRO (R) — A man caused a stir at a U.N. crime conference in Cairo when the closed circuit camera system transmitted a picture of him kissing a woman in the back seats of the main conference hall.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

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Explosives store in Gaza — Arafat
GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palesian Liberation Organisation chairman Yasser Arafat on Saturday said Palestinian police have discovered a large store of explosives in Gaza City.

PNA blasts Israel's land seizure; Rabin says redeployment in making

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Israel's decision to expropriate Arab land in Jerusalem is the "highest form of terrorism" and aims at eradicating the Holy City of Palestinians, a senior Palesian National Authority (PNA) official said Saturday.

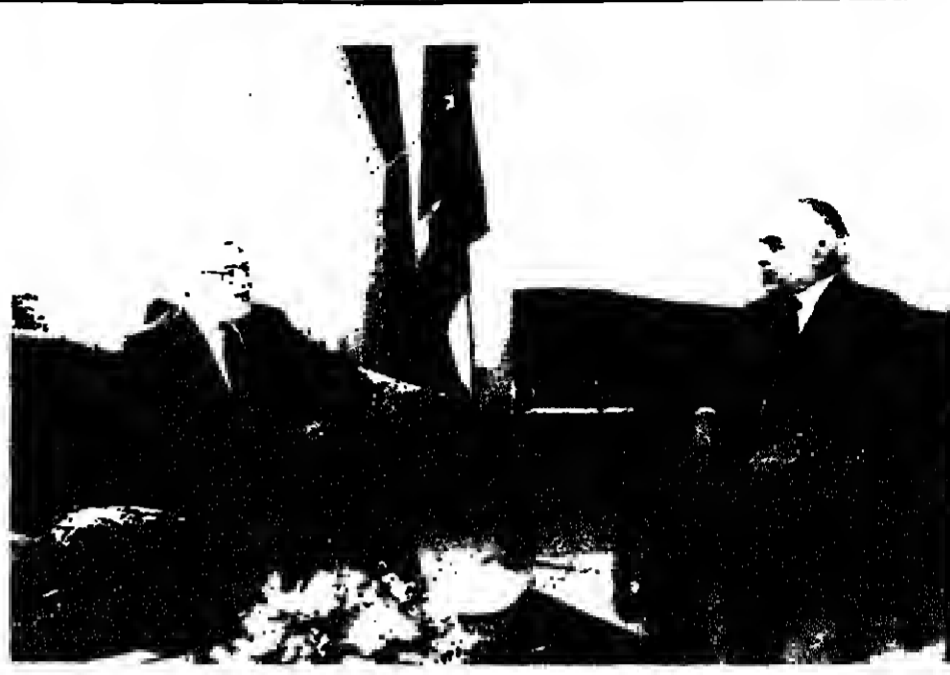
time Liberation Organisation. Mr. Kidwa formally requested that the council "take urgent measures to redress this grave situation and bring an end to the above-mentioned Israeli violations."

Rabin hopes for peace with Syria before polls

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Saturday he hoped to sign peace with Syria before the end of his current term in office in November 1996.

Second suspect held in Oklahoma blast

OKLAHOMA (Agencies) — Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) officials were questioning a second suspect in California in connection with the deadly Oklahoma City car bombing that claimed at least 120 lives, police said.



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday meets Australian Senate Speaker Michael Beahan (Petra photo)

King meets Australian speaker, says people need peace to prosper

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday underlined the need for the establishment of a just and comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East.

Jordan regrets U.N. rejection of RJ request for Libya flights

By Ayman Al Safadi, Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Jordan on Saturday reacted with dismay to a U.N. Sanctions Committee decision to turn down a request by Royal Jordanian (RJ) airlines to carry Libyan pilgrims to Mecca for the annual Haj season.

Postal services get a ministry stamping

By Amy Henderson, Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — If you have noticed any pleasant changes recently at the post office, rest assured that the Ministry of Post and Communications is taking seriously public complaints about postal services.

happy to pay the full price, but why should I pay more? I get tired of negotiating for a fair price and for my change.

Weighing the scales
The JORDAN TIMES conducted an informal investigation of five post offices in central Amman posting five identical piles of mail, consisting of four pieces each. The charges were as follows:

Hotel, it was noted that the cost of postage varied between offices.
The Jordan Times submitted this information, along with a list of public complaints to the ministry which replied in turn.

U.S. says Russia may expand deal with Iran

WASHINGTON (R) — A top Russian official, to the alarm of the United States, has raised the possibility of providing Iran with bomb-grade nuclear fuel in addition to atomic reactors, U.S. officials say.

They said Washington learned about two weeks ago that the issue had been raised with Iran by Viktor Mikhailov, head of the cash-strapped Russian Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Mikhailov is the leading advocate of an estimated \$1 billion deal to sell nuclear reactors to Iran, which Washington is trying to stop. "Subsequent to our worries about the reactors, we discovered there have been some discussions between Mikhailov and Iran to do things that go well beyond the reactors, to include the provision of enriched uranium," one U.S. official told Reuters.

This would "clearly go beyond what the (international) nuclear guidelines prohibit countries from doing," he said.

If such an expanded deal were to go forward, it would "substantially increase the risk" posed by Russian nuclear cooperation with Iran, although just providing reactors by themselves is serious enough, another U.S. official said.

Russian officials, including

Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, in talks with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, have said Mr. Mikhailov is operating on his own and does not represent the views of President Boris Yeltsin's government.

That has not erased concerns in a U.S. administration that has made the Iran deal a major issue and a focus of the May 10 Moscow summit between Mr. Yeltsin and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Washington considers Iran a leading sponsor of terrorism, on a "crash programme" to produce nuclear weapons. It opposes all nuclear cooperation with Iran, arguing that even projects allowed under the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty would help it acquire the expertise to pursue weapons production.

The Russian newspaper Isvestia and the Washington Post recently made little-noticed references to an expanded deal with Iran. U.S. officials, who asked not to be identified, explained those references but refused to provide much detail.

U.S. alarm bells rang in January when Russia signed a contract with Iran to build light-water reactors at Bushehr on the Gulf. Russian engineers are inspecting sites there.

Now, however, "we have seen some indication of a

very broad nuclear deal, which is the reactor in a deluxe configuration and would make more problematic our non-proliferation concerns," a third U.S. official said. "Uranium enrichment... was flagged by U.S. experts as the key item."

The administration "has had indications that this is Mikhailov out on a limb and it ain't going to happen," the official said. "At this point I see no reason not to (believe this) but it's something we're going to have to watch."

He said he did not believe a commitment to provide Iran with enriched uranium, a key ingredient in nuclear weapons, was included in the existing Russia-Iran contract.

Washington has withheld cooperation on peaceful nuclear projects to pressure Moscow to drop the deal. It has also shared intelligence on Iran with Moscow and said Russia might get a share in a \$4.5 billion U.S.-North Korea nuclear deal.

But Mr. Kozyrev said Friday: "I don't see why (the reactor deal) should be stopped. We will not do anything which bears the potential for the nuclear military capacity of Iran."

U.S. officials are working with Russia on a possible summit statement in which Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Clinton lay out their positions on Iran and where they differ.

Wives of American prisoners head for Iraq

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two American women whose husbands are serving eight-year sentences in Iraq for illegal entry into the country headed for Baghdad on Saturday hoping to meet their husbands and possibly appeal for their release to the Iraqi government.

Linda Barloon, 37, and Kathy Daliberti, 39, crossed the Rweished border post shortly after noon after getting visas from the Iraqi embassy in Amman and were expected in Baghdad late Saturday.

They were escorted by Ryszard Krystosik, head of the Polish diplomatic mission in Baghdad. Poland looks after American interests in Iraq after Iraq severed diplomatic ties with the U.S. during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis over Kuwait.

Mrs. Barloon, who lives in Kuwait, and Mrs. Daliberti, who lives in Florida, did not go to the Iraqi embassy to get the visa. An employee of the U.S. embassy delivered the passports and collected the visas early Saturday.

The two women were smuggled out of their hotels, away from the press, around 10 a.m., triggering a car chase through Amman

streets. However, Mrs. Barloon spoke to the press at the Rweished passport control. "We hope to meet them (husbands)," she told reporters, but she would not say whether she and Mrs. Daliberti would appeal to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for their release. "We will not discuss this with you," she said.

William Barloon, 39, and David Daliberti, 41, were detained by Iraqi border security forces on March 13 after they crossed into Iraqi territory. On March 25, an Iraqi court found them guilty of illegal entry to Iraq and sentenced them to eight years in prison. A higher court is expected to hear an appeal in May.

The U.S. government says that the two men wandered into Iraqi territory inadvertently. Some reports suggested that they were looking for Iraqi smugglers to buy alcohol for consumption.

The two wives were cleared for travel by the U.S. government, which has banned American travel to Iraq.

It was not clear when the two women will be allowed to meet their husbands, who are held in the Abu Gharib prison outside Baghdad.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Friday that "we hope that there



Linda Barloon and Kathy Daliberti, wives of crossing point on Saturday (Photo by Youssef two Americans jailed in Iraq, and Polish diplomat Ryszard Krystosik at the Rweished

will be meetings and reunions scheduled with their husbands shortly after the women's arrival in Baghdad.

Mr. Barloon works for U.S. defence company McDonnell Douglas and has lived in Kuwait with his wife and three children for the past 2½ years.

Mr. Daliberti works for the defence company Kay and Associated.

Mrs. Barloon arrived in

Amman from Kuwait on Friday and joined Ms. Daliberti, who flew a day earlier from Florida.

The State Department said on Thursday Iraq has allowed letters to be delivered to two Americans imprisoned in Baghdad by a messenger after repeatedly denying direct access to the prisoners by the Polish diplomat.

The contact was the first in two weeks with Mr. Barloon

and Mr. Daliberti, spokesman Burns said.

"... We were able to send a messenger to the jail and this person delivered mail, including a letter from Mr. Krystosik to Mr. Daliberti and Mr. Barloon, which explained that he had been denied access to them and that their wives were going to be arriving soon with other supplies for them," Mr. Burns said.

Market forces still work in Somalia

MOGADISHU (R) — Somalia's central bank was blown to bits and looted years ago but market forces still have a crazy way of working amid the anarchy of this Horn of Africa country.

This week, U.S. dollars have flooded the capital because exporters are cashing in on the Hajj pilgrimage season to Mecca by dispatching ships loaded with pilgrims to the city.

As a result, the Somali shilling strengthened on Thursday from 6,500 to the dollar to 5,450 shillings.

In early March, the shilling took a fall from around 4,500 to about 6,500 shillings to the dollar when United Nations peacekeeping forces evacuated after a failed two-year, \$3 billion mission to restore peace. The U.N. operation in Somalia was the country's largest single employer.

Rates are set by traders who sit in Mogadishu's teeming Bakaara market and keep up to date with interna-

tional currency markets by listening to reports on the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Many feared a return to all-out civil war between rival clan militias with the pullout of U.N. forces, but that has not yet happened and trade has boomed at Mogadishu port.

Somalia was plunged into anarchy when clan guerrillas ousted former President Mohammad Siad Barre in January 1991.

The doors of the central bank were blown apart, safes were looted and much of the cash was looted. Bank notes littered the streets outside. But in apparent defiance of the principles of economics, the Somali shilling maintained value and is still used locally.

Mogadishu's two main rival warlords — Mohammad Farah Aided and Ali Mahdi Mohammad — tore the city apart in bitter feuding that in part was caused by a quarrel over money.

General Aided was angry that Mr. Ali Mahdi had privately imported "new Somali shilling" bank notes to pay his militias.

The new Somali shillings are now only accepted in Mr. Ali Mahdi's enclave in northern Mogadishu, while most of the rest of the country uses old Somali shillings.

In northwestern Somalia, the former British protectorate that declared independence from the rest of the country in May 1991, clan leaders want to introduce their own currency too.

With no more banknotes being printed — Somalia has no government for four years — the currency is literally disintegrating in people's hands.

People welcomed the appearance of counterfeit bank notes on the market early this year — and used them as tender — because they were clean and looked good, a Mogadishu resident said.

France to cut aid to Algeria — report

PARIS (Agencies) — France is planning to cut financial aid to Algeria to five billion francs (\$1.04 billion) this year from six billion (\$1.25 billion) in 1994, the newspaper Le Monde said on Friday.

The daily, quoting unnamed senior government officials, said the cut would not be announced until the summer, well after the May 7 French presidential election.

No comment was immediately available from the economy ministry.

A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said France will maintain a high level of economic aid to Algeria to prevent economic chaos adding to the country's political turmoil. No figure was fixed for the aid "to the Algerian people," he said.

"The aim of the French economic aid is to prevent economic chaos adding to the political chaos," he said. Le Monde said the cut, linked to French budget savings, would be offset by France's participation in the rescheduling of its former colony's foreign debt.

But it said it was likely to be perceived in Algeria as a shift towards a cooler attitude to the military-backed government in its fight against Muslim fundamentalist rebels.

Algeria and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is expected next month to sign an agreement on an economic adjustment programme carrying \$1.8 billion credits.

The agreement is to be followed by a rescheduling of \$20 billion of Algeria's debt in the Paris Club of Western creditors.

Prime Minister Edouard Balladur has pledged that Paris would help Algeria win international economic aid. But France's backing to Algerian authorities has been markedly cooler since a dispute over the hijacking of a French airliner at Algiers airport.

Main Iraqi Kurdish groups to take part in Ankara talks

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish government has said talks would be held in Ankara in May with representatives of the two main Kurdish movements to discuss control of the common border.

Cenk Duatepe, head of the intelligence department in the Turkish foreign ministry, said no system had yet been established for border control, but he said a Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) delegation was expected before May 10 in Ankara, followed by a Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) delegation later in the month.

Mr. Duatepe was speaking following a meeting Thursday with PUK leader Jalal Talabani in Erbil, capital of Iraqi Kurdistan.

It was the second meeting

between a Turkish government representative and a representative of a main Iraqi Kurdish movement.

Mr. Talabani told the Turkish delegation there were no armed elements from the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in his sector, according to the Turkish officials.

And he agreed to cooperate with Ankara "to examine whether or not there was an armed PKK presence in his sector," said the Turkish delegation.

On April 5 KDP leader Massoud Barzani conditionally agreed to cooperate on border security, according to Turkish officials.

The statement from Ankara came amid increasing international friction over the

Turkish campaign against separatist PKK rebels.

Turkey reacted angrily, after the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly Wednesday recommended Turkey be suspended from the body if it did not improve democracy in the country and its human rights record within two months.

On Friday, the European Parliament gave the all-clear for a customs union agreement with Turkey later this year — provided Turkey respected human rights and democracy.

Meanwhile, Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen said Friday she would not recognise the customs union between the European Union and Turkey if the latter does not withdraw its

troops from Iraq.

Turkey stepped up its struggle against militant PKK separatists in mid-March in the southeast of the country.

It also moved some 35,000 troops across the border into northern Iraq to crush suspected PKK bases, a move which has attracted widespread international criticism.

On Tuesday, Turkey responded to criticism of its operations in northern Iraq by pulling two thirds of its troops out with the return of 20,000 soldiers.

However, Ankara did not say how long its remaining soldiers would stay in the border zone valleys or how it proposed to stop Kurd rebels mounting more attacks into Turkey.

Iraq celebrates Saddam's birthday

TIKRIT, Iraq (R) — About 100,000 Iraqis shouted praise for President Saddam Hussein on his 58th birthday in his hometown on Friday and vowed to defend him to the death.

Brandishing guns, pistols, swords and daggers, tens of thousands of people swarmed past a reviewing stand in Tikrit, 170 kilometres north of Baghdad, yelling: "With our blood, with our souls we shall defend you Saddam."

The show of support was the greatest for President Saddam since the country's defeat in the 1991 Gulf war in which Iraqi troops were driven out of Kuwait by U.S.-led allies.

President Saddam, firmly in power despite the ruinous war and punitive trade sanctions imposed by the United Nations for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, was not present.

The Iraqi News Agency said he attend ceremonies in Baghdad for the start of construction of two mosques, one of them portrayed in Iraq as the largest in the history of Islam.

In Tikrit, formations of air force planes and helicopter gunships flew over the crowd as a military band played anthems in praise of the Iraqi leader.

Tribesmen and chieftains travelled to Tikrit from Mosul, 200 kilometres to the north, and pitched tents along streets and the highway to Baghdad, offering free coffee and food.

Izzat Ibrahim, vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, presided over the celebrations in the agricultural town where a parade of tribesmen and ruling Baath Party members under arms lasted for about two hours.

Dancing and singing girls wearing Arab and Kurdish costumes swirled on the parade ground to the strains of folk music. Foreign journalists were permitted to attend under escort by Information Ministry officials.

Iraqi radio and television aired special programmes and during the breaks a choir of young boys and girls sang: "Happy birthday to you, Paps Saddam."

Shehab (youth television), run by President Saddam's eldest son Uday, showed a military parade organised by a newly formed force of "Saddam's commandos". Officials said about 60,000 commandos with tanks and armoured personnel carriers participated.

"The birthday of the leader is the feast of all Iraqis," Al Thawra, the Baath Party newspaper, said in a banner headline.

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Contractor said kidnapped or killed in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somali gunmen in the southern port city of Kismayo have either kidnapped or killed a multi-millionaire New Zealand businessman with extensive interests in this war-torn Horn of Africa nation, according to reports reaching Mogadishu.

David Morris, head of Morris Catering, based in Queensland, Australia, was kidnapped and was still alive, according to one source.

But other sources — businessmen and fishermen contacted by radio — said Morris was dead, and that they had seen his body.

Morris, a blunt-spoken businessman, made his fortune by supplying provisions to U.N. troops in such trouble-spots as Cambodia, the Middle East and Somalia.

One of his sons, in his early 20s, was shot dead — an execution — following an ambush just outside Mogadishu in October 1993 in what former U.N. Special Representative to Somalia Victor Ghebho of Ghana said was a result of a business feud between Morris senior and Somalia.

Morris, who kept a picture

of his son in his wharfside office in Mogadishu, said 16 months after his death that "I have enough money, but I can't leave here until I produce something positive."

He was trying at that point to weld a coalition of Somalia businessmen to take over the running of Mogadishu port after the departure in early March of this year of the U.N. troops then controlling it.

That coalition is now up and running, and the port is operating, though it is unclear what influence Morris had in the creation of the committee.

Morris appeared to be a survivor — and savvy. In Mogadishu, he had his own armoured personnel carrier, painted white, and festooned with barbed-wire to keep the joy-riders off.

U.N. staff said Somali gunmen aboard "technicals" — the battle-wagons that roam the streets of this lawless city — would occasionally take pot-shots at it to see their bullets bounce off.

At his wharf headquarters, Morris had a hideaway enclosed between shipping containers, safe from incoming

fire from the warring Somali factions.

He had his own militia to protect him, but accepted the protection of appropriate technicals when he went out into the city to negotiate with warlords.

His relations with the U.N. troops he fed were rough.

He described the U.N. officials to AFP in January as "misinformed, misguided and bloody stupid."

Mr. Ghebho replied that Morris was unscrupulous and that his behaviour bordered on thuggery.

Morris's senior staff were mostly New Zealanders and Australians, importing food and other supplies for the U.N. troops, plus at least one shipment of incredibly cheap cars from Saudi Arabia — one sports model chalked for Morris himself — which were said by his staff to have been stolen.

Morris Catering also operated a fish processing factory on the coast of northern Somalia.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said Saturday he was awaiting confirmation of reports that

Morris had been kidnapped or killed in Somalia.

Mr. Evans said he had not had confirmation of the reports but "if true it would be extremely distressing."

"People involved with the Morris Catering outfit, including David, have been very courageous and it would be just an absolute tragedy if this has happened," Mr. Evans told reporters here.

"But until I get confirmation or better information about what the circumstances, I'm afraid I cannot comment further."

Morris Catering spokesman Robert McVicker said Saturday that the U.N. was in no way to blame for Morris' reported killing.

Mr. McVicker told Australian radio, shortly before flying to Somalia, that the Morris family had paid a high price with the death of Tyson Morris last year in Somalia.

"It was Tyson's wish that the company move ahead and David continued his operations and, as the director of the company, I agreed with him that it was the right thing to do," he said. "That's what Tyson would have wanted."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Animated Classics

15:00 Feature film: "Hockey Challenge"

16:30 Tarzan

17:00 Les Raisons Laveau

17:30 Envoye Special

19:00 News in French

19:15 Ushualia

19:30 The Bold and the Beautiful

20:00 Masterpieces of Literature

20:30 Almost Home

21:10 The Other Side of Paradise

22:00 News in English

22:30 Feature film: "Attack Force Z1"

23:30 The Hidden Room

00:30 Grace and Favour

PRAYER TIMES

04:22 Fajr

05:47 (Sunrise) Dhuha

12:33 Dhuhur

16:12 'Asr

19:19 Maghreb

20:44 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetlich, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrence Church Tel. 623366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630551, Tel. 626543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 625326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195

The Lutheran Church Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to rise with winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 8/29

Aqaba 16/ 33

Deserts 9/ 31

Jordan Valley 15/ 32

Yesterday's high temperatures:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 643402

Traffic Police 696390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 619300

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 661912

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101

Abdullah Telephone Repairs 771111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 81381/332

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestina, Shmiesani 664171/4

Shmiesani Hospital 669131

Shmiesani Hospital 695348

Al-Mushter Hospital 667271/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreh 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26

Amr, Marha 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602401/51

Amal Hospital 617155

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital 109393/323

Zarqa National Hospital 109393/323

Ibn Sina Hospital 109393/323

Al-Hana Modern Hospital 093939/90

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital 02375555

Great Catholic Hospital 02372775

Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital 02371700

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital 03314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:35 Bangkok (RJ)

10:00 Damascus (RJ)

10:05 Larnaca (RJ)

10:05 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

11:00 Jeddah, Aqaba, (RJ)

11:15 Beirut (RJ)

11:30 Doha, Bahrain, (RJ)

11:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

18:00 London (RJ)

18:55 Athens (OA)

19:40 Athens (RJ)

20:30 Brussels, Geneva (RJ)

21:00 Rome (RJ)

21:20 Vienna (RJ)

21:45 Frankfurt (RJ)

00:05 Aqaba (RJ)

02:45 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:30 Sanaa (Y)

14:30 Sanaa (Y)

15:05 Moscow (SU)

22:00 Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:25 Beirut (RJ)

09:30 Aqaba, Frankfurt (RJ)

11:35 Aqaba, Rome, Jeddah (RJ)

12:30 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

12:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

12:50 Athens (RJ)

13:00 Sanaa (RJ)

21:00 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)

21:30 Jeddah (RJ)

21:45 Aqaba (RJ)

22:00 New Delhi (RJ)

22:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

22:30 Damascus (RJ)

22:45 Athens (OA)

23:45 Sanaa (RJ)

23:45 Bangkok (RJ)

23:50 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:30 Rome (AZ)

13:30 Sanaa (Y)

14:30 Sanaa (Y)

15:05 Moscow (SU)

22:00 Cairo (MS)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500

Banana 600

Banana (Mukammal) 620

Cabbage 200/120

Carrot 220/120

Cauliflower 160/120

Cucumbers (large) 10

and for Iraq



Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday listens to an address by General Federation of Jordanian Women President Haifa Abu Ghazaleh at the opening of a conference on the effects of husbands' immigration on the family (Photo by Crystal)



Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday listens to an address by General Federation of Jordanian Women President Haifa Abu Ghazaleh at the opening of a conference on the effects of husbands' immigration on the family (Photo by Crystal)

Experts seek to ease burden on women whose husbands immigrate for work

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With the increasing numbers of husbands immigrating in search of better wages, problems within the family increase as a result, and mothers bear the heaviest burden, experts agree.

The negative effects of a husband's immigration on his family is being tackled in a two-day conference opened Saturday by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, president of the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW) which organized the conference, said the event, the first of its kind in the Arab World, aims at studying legislative, economic, and social changes that occur following husbands' immigrations.

"Although husbands' immigration yields good financial outcomes, it will negatively affect the entire family and the way children are brought up," Dr. Abu Ghazaleh said addressing representatives of public institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Director of the Arab League Population Research and Studies Unit (PRSU) Mahmoud Sayed pointed out that more than one quarter of the male labour force of Arab countries left their families to seek work in other countries which has resulted in mothers managing their families on their own.

"The focus will be on the Arab woman and her capabilities of dealing with these new responsibilities and how that will reflect on her children in the future," he said.

In doing so, Dr. Sayed said, participants will review some studies conducted by Arab centres concerning fathers' immigration and the effect on the family.

Dr. Sayed stressed that the outcome of the event would push decision makers and leaders to become more aware of the negative effects of fathers' immigration and the heavy burden mothers suffer as a result.

The event, coorganised by the PRSU and held at the Regency Palace Hotel, will conclude its sessions today with papers on two subjects. One is statistical presentation on immigrant families from Jordan by Abdullah Zoubi of the Department of Statistics.

The second paper is on the legal and legislative services introduced to the families of immigrants and will be presented by Dr. Abu Ghazaleh and Senator Na'ala Rashdan.

The GFJW, established in 1981, is a national non-governmental organisation comprising women's associations, societies, committees and individual members.

Queen Noor, the honorary president of GFJW, who has spearheaded many projects aimed at raising the economic, social, health and educational standards of Jordanian women, has commended the federation on its constructive approach towards the challenges and obstacles impeding the development of women in Jordan.

House panel condemns Israeli confiscations of Palestinian land in Arab East Jerusalem

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Saturday condemned Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land in Arab Jerusalem and said this action constitutes a violation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

Committee Chairman Abdullah Ensour said the committee, in a meeting earlier Saturday, discussed these Israeli practices, which he said, constitute a breach of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement reached in Oslo, the Madrid Middle East peace conference which launched the Arab-Israeli peace talks in 1991, and United Nations resolutions.

Dr. Ensour said the committee found that such practices challenge the feelings of Arab and Islamic peoples.

"We will continue to denounce and resist such practices and their outcome," he said.

The Israelis and Palestinians have been trading angry accusations in recent days over Israel's latest confiscation of Arab-owned land in Jerusalem. Israel intends to build new neighbourhoods on these lands to house Jewish immigrants.

The Palestinians said Israel violated the Israeli-PLO peace accord, and that they would complain to the U.N. Security Council.

Israeli newspapers Friday said the seizing of Palestinian land in the holy city was expected to continue.

The future of Jerusalem is the most explosive issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem are to begin by May 1996.

Earlier this week, Israel confiscated 140 acres in two areas in Arab East Jerusalem, and Israeli sources said an additional 1,100 acres were earmarked for confiscation.

Dr. Ensour said the committee also discussed the death of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons as a result of torture as reported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The Jordanian Lower House Committee, he said, has received information from the Red Cross on the torture and death of Palestinians under Israeli detention.

"This raises disgust among human beings all over the world in spite of the silence of the West which is known for its double standards," Dr. Ensour said.

"The committee wonders what would be the reaction of the biased and unfair mass media be had the victim been Israeli?" asked the committee chairman.

Press reports on Friday said a Palestinian who died in Israeli custody was tortured to death.

The detainee, identified as Abdul Samad Harizat, was beaten for 20 minutes, had his head banged against a wall and was then left alone in a tiny isolation cell, Israeli media said.

An agent of the Israeli Shin Beth secret service who entered the cell several hours later to pursue the interrogation found the 30-year-old computer programmer unconscious. He died a few hours later in hospital on Tuesday, reports said.

Dr. Ensour said the committee also discussed Israel's continuation of excavation works beneath Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, an Israeli group on Saturday denounced Israel's decision to confiscate Arab-owned lands in Jerusalem and said the decision is a serious breach of the Oslo agreement.

The committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, founded by Israelis of oriental origin, said the continuation of confiscations and settlement activities, particularly in the Jerusalem area, threatens the peace process.

"This makes the Israeli government take full responsibility for the failure of the peace process, and we ask it to rescind its decision immediately," the committee said in a statement.

Visiting Australian legislators explore how they can contribute to peace process

AMMAN (Petra) — Visiting President of the Australian Senate Michael Beahan told the Upper House of Parliament Saturday that his team's visit to Jordan was aimed at familiarising itself with the progress of the peace process in the Middle East and to determine the role which Australia could play in this process.

Mr. Beahan also noted that the visit also aimed at exploring further economic and trade relations with Jordan, adding that bilateral ties were very good at the moment.

Referring to a visit to Australia by a Jordanian parliamentary delegation earlier this month, Senator Beahan said the visit was fruitful, noting that the Australian parliament wishes to promote its ties with Jordan's legislative and exchange working visits.

The Australian delegation, which arrived here from the occupied Arab lands Friday on a three-day visit to Jordan, listened to Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi outline Jordan's position with regard to peace with Israel.

His first deputy, Zeid Rifai, briefed the visitors on the progress of the peace process and the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, stressing that the Arabs desire a comprehensive peace which would bring about an improvement in social and economic conditions.

With reference to the Amman economic summit due in October, Mr. Rifai, a former prime minister, said Jordan hopes it will be successful and differ from the Casablanca economic summit which, he said, merely raised slogans which were considered inapplicable.

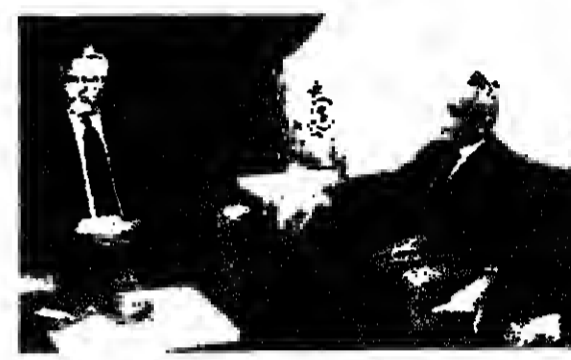
Mr. Rifai said that the peoples of the Middle East would like to feel the benefits of peace and they remain optimistic and full of hope.

The Australian team Saturday also met with the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'ad Hayel Srou and discussed the peace process and Jordan's democratic march as well as Jordanian-Australian relations.

Mr. Beahan said he hoped that the Australian and Jordanian parliamentarians would continue to exchange visits and cooperate in parliamentary affairs.

Also Saturday Senator Beahan and his delegation visited the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and met RSS Vice President Saeed Alloush who briefed the group on the RSS's different departments, programmes and projects.

Dr. Alloush referred to RSS's cooperation with Arab and foreign countries and Australian institutions of scientific research, and said he looked forward to further such cooperation.



Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi Saturday receives visiting President of the Australian parliament Michael Beahan and an accompanying delegation (Petra photo)

Education ministry to implement vocational training plan — official

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education will implement a new vocational training plan at the start of the next scholastic year in accordance with the requirements of the 1987 National Educational Plan, according to Ali Nasrallah, director of vocational training at the Ministry.

Addressing the opening session of a two-day symposium for vocational training supervisors, Mr. Nasrallah also announced that the ministry has prepared a comprehensive plan aimed at increasing the scope of vocational training at schools and encouraging more students to opt for this stream of study.

The plan, he noted, is to be implemented shortly in cooperation with international experts and the National Centre for Educational Research and Development.

The two plans, added Mr. Nasrallah, are designed to fill major gaps in the local labour market and to meet the requirements of the Kingdom's socio-economic development plans.

The meeting, which is attended by 80 vocational training supervisors, was opened by Ministry of Education Secretary General Izzat Jaradat who complained that the previous vocational training programmes concentrated on quantity rather than quality.

The two plans, however, emphasise quality in that they are designed to enable the trainees to acquire advanced skills and the vocational schools to produce items needed for the students, said Dr. Jaradat who added that the ministry plans to promote closer cooperation between the vocational schools and private and public institutions.

He said in the past, vocational training at ministry schools lacked proper supervision, noting that such supervision is now getting the right attention.

The vocational supervisors, who came from different educational departments in Jordan, are to review working papers dealing with various aspects of vocational training and management.

Officials say summer water rationing imminent but schedule, severity still to be decided

By Cathy King
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Summer water rationing will be imposed again this year, but the schedule and severity of it has yet to be decided and water authority officials say that improvements to the Greater Amman network cannot alone solve the problem in the capital.

"There will be rationing this summer, but to a lesser extent than in the past," said Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) Under Secretary Ousai Qataishat Saturday.

"Hopefully people won't feel it. With storage tanks you can have about three days supply without noticing there isn't continuous flow."

Summer water rationing began in 1991 and is partly attributable to larger demands following the influx of more than 300,000 returning expatriates from the Gulf region.

Jordanians working in the Gulf were returned home because of a strain in relations between the Gulf states and Jordan during and after the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

"Maybe next year there will be no need for rationing," said Mr. Qataishat, who added: "We can't tell though, because it depends on the population growth rate and the change in the style of living. Living standards are on the rise and people are consuming more water."

Mr. Qataishat explained that even with household storage tanks, the water problem still remains and will be felt should there be an "unexpected reduction" of flow from the King Abdullah Canal, a power cut, or a breakdown in the network.

The Jordan-Israel peace treaty, signed on Oct. 26, stipulated that the Kingdom is to receive an additional 215 million cubic metres (mcm) of water annually. The allocation of water from the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers is divided between the summer and winter periods. Now only six months since the peace accords, water from these two sources has yet to be received in full.

As yet, the WAJ has not decided how the 215 mcm will be allocated and distributed between agricultural and domestic use.

"The allocation of it has not been decided upon."

Predominantly, it will be for domestic use, but until it comes, there will be a (water) deficit," Mr. Qataishat said.

The agreement also requires Jordan and Israel to cooperate in finding an additional quantity of 50 mcm of drinkable water for the Kingdom's supply.

The Joint Water Committee is to develop a plan for this supply within one year from entry into the treaty, and then the plan will be forwarded to the respective governments for discussion and decision.

One additional supply Jordan intends to exploit, is the unreplenishable fossil water of the Disi aquifer, said WAJ civil engineer and head of the Tenders Division Othman Kurdi.

The WAJ is seeking private sector investment to conduct a feasibility study for this project. The tender has been issued for bidding, then pending government approval, the design and construction of the facility may be opened to the private sector is still to be obtained, Mr. Kurdi said.

In the meantime the WAJ is striving to reduce the amount of water unaccounted for through physical losses.

"Over the whole country, 54 per cent of the water (passing through the network) cannot be accounted for. Some through physical losses and some through underflow registration," Mr. Kurdi told the Jordan Times.

Underflow registration occurs because water meters cannot register small quantities of water passing through them.

To combat these problems, parts of the network have already been rehabilitated.

In Zarqa, Mr. Kurdi said, the whole network has been replaced. "You never see a burst pipe and water pressure is maintained at a normal rate. You no longer find a thin stream coming out the tap."

To date, only the networks of Jebel Nasser and Nadi Subbaq areas within Greater Amman have been replaced, using the water authority's budget.

In December 1993, the water authority concluded a loan agreement with KfW, the German development bank.

"KfW guaranteed a loan for two projects," said Mr. Kurdi. "The first is under award now, and the second will be issued (for bidding) by early June."

The first includes Jebel Amman and Luweibdeh and should begin by the end of May, while the second is in Jebel Hussein.

"The number of projects is variable because they are drawn according to geographical boundary," he said.

The Greater Amman network stretches 1,800 kilometres. Mr. Kurdi was unable to predict how much of it would require replacing, because it depends on the state of the existing network.

Priority areas are those with the oldest network, which includes the areas within the first two projects and will cost about JD 10 million, Mr. Kurdi noted.

With physical work imminent, Germany has "expressed an interest to take over the remaining projects," he revealed.

"Germany promised to make an appraisal of the mission and to assess the remaining work," he added.

Mr. Kurdi conceded that to "rehabilitate all of Greater Amman might add up to JD 50-60 million."

Network rehabilitation, plus extensions to newly developed areas, will take five or six years to complete, he added. Over that period, the gradual reduction of unaccounted water should be felt in all areas, he said.

"We won't get rid of the problem of unaccounted water totally; this exists everywhere (worldwide), but the WAJ aims to diminish the problem as best it can."

Meanwhile, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has approved a loan for the Jordan Water and Waste Water III Project.

"Although the money has not yet been received, there are only formalities remaining," Mr. Kurdi assured.

There are seven projects within the loan's realm: Mafrag water, Ajloun water, Zarqa, Irbid, Souf and Greater Amman waste water projects and the waste water treatment plant for Fuhels and Mahes.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has also earmarked an unspecified amount to upgrade and expand the waste water treatment plant at Khirbet Al Samra and intends to conduct a feasibility study for an environmental system for waste water treatment and collection in the Amman/Zarqa basin, Mr. Kurdi said.

Save water... every drop counts!

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

- Film entitled "Beyond The Stars" at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

JEWELLERY DISPLAY

- An exhibition of jewellery inspired by the nature of Dhana (designed by Ammar Khammash in cooperation with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature) at Darat Al Funnun.

SPRING EXHIBITIONS

- The Queen Alia Fund for Social Development spring exhibition at Beit Al Bawadi of "Rus and Ceramics," Medina Munawara Street.
- Annual spring exhibition: "Donors of Opportunity" by the Bani Hamida at the Jordanian Constitution Contractors Association Building, Abdoun (Tel: 658696).
- Spring exhibition of the culture of the Caucasus (handicrafts, photos, videotapes, etc.) at Plaza Hotel.

DIALOGUE

- Dialogue with film director Mohammad Shahin and actress Muna Wasef at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITION

- Exhibition: "Dieter Magnus Art & Nature Landscapes" (contribution on urban and residential environment design from an artist's point of view) at the Cultural and Sport Centre of the Amman Municipality.
- Exhibition of paintings of Rizq Abdul Hadi at Baladna Art Gallery.
- Exhibition of contemporary calligraphy at the National Museum of Fine Arts.
- Exhibition of paintings by Lebanese artist Karim Al Hage at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Exhibition of plastic art by several Jordanian artists at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
- Photography exhibition entitled "Fuentes de la Memoria" at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).

NEW ENGLISH SCHOOL

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UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

AN ART EXHIBITION TO BE HELD AT THE NEW ENGLISH SCHOOL

The two famous French Artists (Jean Cotté) and (Isabelle Granier) will exhibit their paintings at the New English School in Khaldia under the Patronage of

Her Majesty Queen Noor on Thursday 4/5/1995.

The exhibition contains paintings which have been inspired by the environments and heritage of both Jordan and France. The Exhibition will be open to the public on Friday 5th May 1995 till Sunday 14th May 1995 from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

S. Koreans rampage over blast

TAEGU, South Korea (R) — Weeping relatives demanded compensation Saturday for the loss of 100 of their loved ones, most of them children, killed when a gas blast devastated a swathe of South Korea's Taegu City.

Police investigating Friday's blast said prosecutors would seek the arrest of three officials of a small engineering firm which was working at a shopping centre project near the blast.

The relatives' grief turned to anger when around 60 of them besieged a local council office, accusing ashen-faced officials of neglect and of leaving corpses from the blast to rot in city morgues.

"Dozens of bodies are rotting at the hospitals because they don't know what to do with them," a weeping parent said.

The relatives smashed desks and chairs at an office hastily converted into an emergency centre after the explosion ripped through a central district of South Korea's third largest city, 240 kilometres south of Seoul.

Taegu Mayor Lee Jong-Ju spoke to the families later and said loved ones of each victim would get a preliminary

compensation payment of four million won (\$5,250) to help with funeral expenses.

A police spokesman told Reuters the three men sought by prosecutors were officials of Standard Engineering and Construction Inc.

"Prosecutors are seeking the arrest of these three men in connection with the gas explosion," the police official said.

A grim-faced President Kim Young-Sam, reeling from yet another man-made disaster in his term of office, visited the scene of the blast and ordered a swift probe.

"I don't know what to say now. In particular I want to express my deep condolences on the death of these young students," Mr. Kim said after touring the scene.

Of the 98 official death toll so far, 48 of the victims were children heading for schools in the area when the explosion hurled cars, trucks and buses through the air like toys. Thirty-five were from nearby Yongnam Middle School.

"How could this happen to my children? I am simply at a loss for words," school principal Lee Kil-Woo said.

The blast turned massive

steel plates laid as a temporary road surface over the subway works into a deadly hail that crushed all in their path, including pedestrians.

Vehicles tumbled into the yawning construction pit, including some buses carrying the children to school.

At the scene of the disaster, rescuers ended a painstaking sift through debris, saying they no longer expected to find any more bodies.

A spokesman for the subway construction company said its preliminary investigation showed the accident happened when a digger working at the shopping centre project opened up an eight-centimetre (five-inch) fracture to a gas main.

The gas then seeped into the cavernous hole where subway work was under way. A welding torch or a cigarette may have sparked the devastation, he said.

"According to our own checks, there was no destruction or damage of a gas pipeline in our construction sector," he told reporters. He said a worker reported the smell of gas 10 minutes before the blast.

Less than five months ago

a similar blast killed 12 in Seoul and three months before that 32 died when a bridge in the South Korean capital collapsed.

The gas blast plunged South Koreans into a crisis of soul-searching Saturday amid calls for the government to insist on tougher building safety measures.

"Another man-made disaster... puts Korea to shame," ran a headline of the influential Chosun Ilbo. "It's dreadful to live in this world," said another newspaper headline.

People reacted with frustration and outrage as newspapers and television reports repeatedly suggested the tragedy could have been avoided if there had been proper safety measures.

"The government always locks the stable door after the horse has bolted. If it paid attention to safety measures a bit more, this kind of accident would not happen," said volunteer rescue worker Park Wol-Bun in Taegu.

Analysts have blamed the spate of disasters on corruption, poor construction work and non-enforcement of regulations in the country's headlong pursuit of economic prosperity.



A rescue worker hoists a subway construction worker from an underground construction site after a gas explosion in Taegu, South Korea (AFP photo)

The Han-Kyoreh Shinmun newspaper said in an editorial the disasters could develop into a major political crisis for President Kim.

"The disasters and the massive death of innocent people raise serious doubts about the government's capability to manage the state," it said.

Officials of the ruling Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) fear the blast could hurt its results in June 27 local elections, the first major

political test for Mr. Kim, who took office in February 1993.

"We have no words to say. Our party will refrain from holding political rallies for the time being," a DLP official said.

Opposition groups stepped up attacks on Mr. Kim's leadership.

"It is unimaginable that such an accident took place despite President Kim's repeated stress on safety checks at major public facilities," said

Park Ji-Won, spokesman of the main opposition Democratic Party.

Only six months ago, Mr. Kim stood before a microphone, his head bowed, to apologise for government oversights blamed for the Seoul bridge collapse.

"Like the case of the collapse of the Songju Bridge, the explosion has been caused by the government's indifference to safety matters," said Cho Hae-Woong, a Seoul company official.

India plans elections in Kashmir

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — India is expected to announce plans soon for holding elections in the strife-torn northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, under direct federal rule since a rebellion broke out in 1990, officials said Saturday.

They said the government was working on a set of proposals for holding elections after a five-year period of direct federal rule expires on July 18.

Officials said the Indian parliament would be required to pass a law for any further extension of New Delhi's direct rule in Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in predominantly Hindu India.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao told parliament Friday that the government would soon come out with "clear-cut proposals" to revive the electoral process.

"I would take parliament into confidence shortly about the steps we propose to take to restore complete normalcy in the state," Mr. Rao said.

He said consultations were on over the demand for more autonomy for Kashmir, but he did not set a time-span for holding the polls.

Police and hospital sources say more than 17,000 people have been killed in the separatist rebellion, which India accuses neighbouring Pakistan of inciting.

Mr. Rao, who claimed success in the intensified opera-

tion by the security forces against the separatists, said the mood in the state was relaxed following interactions between political parties and some secessionist leaders, who were recently released from jails.

Shahir Shah, a Kashmiri separatist leader, who was freed four months ago after 20 years in Indian jails, held out hopes earlier this month for elections if the United Nations monitored them and the new government was allowed to start peace talks with India and Pakistan.

Mr. Shah, whose People's League is a member of Kashmir's multi-party Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference, said he had asked its Muslim leaders to accept the participation of the region's minority groups in future peace talks.

The Hurriyat has so far officially opposed Indian plans to hold elections in Kashmir, saying it would divert attention from its demand for self-determination.

Some of the Hurriyat's leaders represent Muslim guerrilla groups. Most want the Himalayan region to merge with Islamic Pakistan. Others say it should be independent of Indian and Pakistani control.

India rules two-thirds of Kashmir, with the rest controlled by Pakistan. The two neighbours have fought three wars, two of them over Kash-

mir, since gaining independence from Britain in 1947.

India's main opposition, the rightwing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), opposes polls in Kashmir, accusing the government of seeking to project a false picture of stability in the state ahead of India's general elections due by June next year.

Meanwhile two powerful explosions blamed on Muslim guerrillas rocked Kashmir's summer capital of Srinagar before dawn Saturday, injuring six people and damaging scores of buildings, police said.

The first blast virtually razed a building housing two Indian banks in the commercial and residential area of Batmaloo. A second blast occurred minutes later near the residence of a retired senior police officer, the police said.

The Kashmir Police Headquarters and the government secretariat were among several buildings in the vicinity damaged by the explosions which were heard all over Srinagar.

The blasts caused two huge craters and triggered panic in Srinagar, the urban hub of a bloody Muslim separatist campaign in Kashmir state.

"It was like an earthquake," one resident said. Two of the injured were identified as security personnel.

Sri Lankan rebels down 2nd plane; 52 killed

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan Tamil rebels have shot down two air force planes in the northern Jaffna peninsula, killing 90 people, the military said Saturday.

The first plane was shot down by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) Friday and the second Saturday morning.

Of the Saturday downing, a military statement said: "An Avro aircraft belonging to the air force came under LTTE missile attack approximately seven kilometres outside the de-

fended area. As a result the aircraft crashed approximately 1.5 kilometres outside the defended area. The aircraft was completely destroyed and all passengers including the crew killed."

It said that as the missile was about to hit the aircraft, the pilot had shouted over his radio "missile attack." The plane had taken off from the Anuradhapura military base in the north central district and was descending to land at the Palaly Air Base on Jaffna.

The 52 dead were 30 soldiers, five sailors, 12 airmen, two policemen and three journalists from a Sinhalese-language newspaper.

On Friday, another plane crashed soon after takeoff from Palaly, killing 38 servicemen. The military had said the crash was due to an engine catching fire.

"Although initial reports from Jaffna yesterday's air crash pointed to an engine fire, it has now been revealed that a similar missile attack caused the air crash..." the military statement said.

Ground controllers had told the pilot they saw a port engine on fire shortly after take-off in driving rain.

The pilot of the twin-engine Avro turned to try to land, by which time the fire had spread to the whole wing. The pilot crashed two metres short of the runway.

The Tigers, fighting for their own homeland in the north and east of Sri Lanka, earlier this month ended a 14-week truce with the government by attacking two navy gunboats and killing 12 sailors.

Vietnam mourns dead, seeks better U.S. ties

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (AP) — With tears for the dead and gestures of friendship to its onetime No. 1 enemy, the United States, Communist Vietnam prepared Saturday to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its triumph.

Although wartime horrors were recalled, banners proclaimed the victory against U.S.-backed South Vietnam and parades were planned here Sunday, official stress was on reconciliation and marching forward on the economic front.

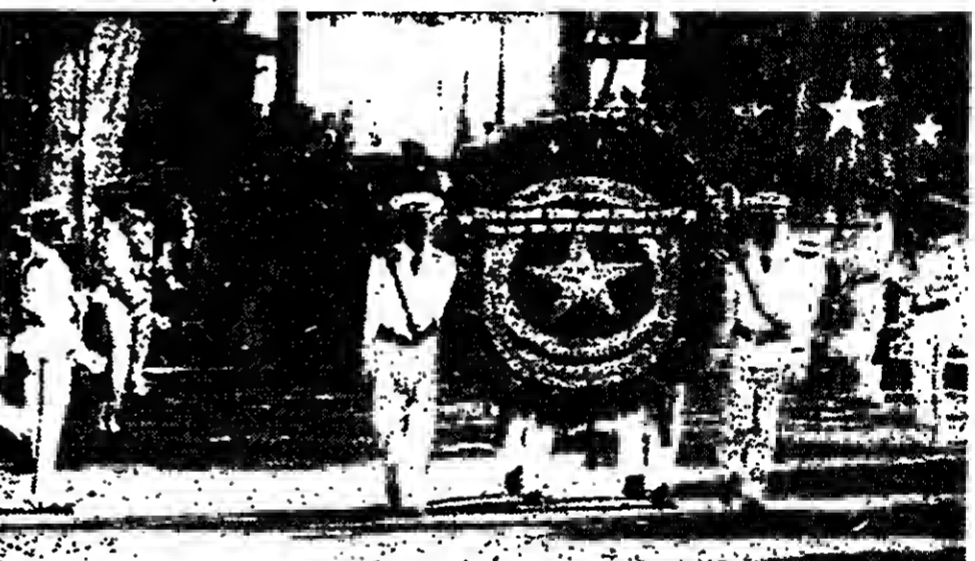
"We won completely the most barbarous and aggressive war in the history of the nation, a war with genocidal crimes such as My Lai-Son My and B-52 bombings and agent orange," said Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet in the capital Hanoi.

But he urged Vietnamese to "shut the past and look to the future to raise our national spirit, expand international relations and to work together with other countries for peace, cooperation and development."

In a speech he called for continuing freemarket-style reforms under the policy of "doi moi" or renovation.

The mayor of Ho Chi Minh City, Truong Tan Sang, said Vietnam's pride in its reunification should not be seen as evidence of anti-Americanism. "I can assure you that we would not do anything to invoke the ghost of past animosity between our two countries," he told reporters.

Far different sentiments were evoked on April 30, 1975 when Communist forces captured the capital of South Vietnam, then known as Saigon, on the heels of



An honour guard carries a wreath in the procession to honour the dead at the War Martyrs' Cemetery Saturday on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the fall of Saigon. Vietnamese throughout the country are paying homage to those killed during the Vietnam War (AFP)

fleeing Americans. Washington was then the reviled enemy, and strict Marxist-Leninism was the order of the day.

While yet to forge full diplomatic ties, the U.S. and Vietnam set up liaison offices in each other's capitals in January and President Bill Clinton ended a 19-year economic embargo last year. Hanoi is eager for full relations, believing this will further spur its economic development.

On the eve of the anniversary, people across the country mourned the dead, although official ceremonies were restricted to cemeteries of Communist soldiers. The poorly tended burial places of the South Vietnamese were largely quiet.

By official count, 1.1 million Communist and 223,000

South Vietnamese soldiers died during the conflict together with some 2 million civilians from both sides. The United States lost 58,200 killed in action while its allies from South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Thailand suffered 5,200 dead.

At the Lac Canh Cemetery north of Ho Chi Minh City, widows and mothers wept and burned joss sticks at the graves of Communist soldiers. Some 11,000 are buried at the neatly manicured cemetery, including 1,500 unknown soldiers.

"A wife lost her husband and children lost their father, but as a nation we are happy that we won the war," said Mrs. Tran Thi Ut, at the graveside of her husband, killed as his unit attacked a Saigon radio station during the pivotal 1968 Tet Offensive.

She said the end of the war, after which South and North Vietnamese were reunited, also meant a family reunion. One of her three sons had fought on the Southern side — in effect against his own father.

Nearby, Truong Thanh Hy walked among the tombstone of fallen comrades. The 71-year-old retired Viet Cong major, his uniform heavy with medals for heroism, said he was wounded 25 years ago in action against U.S. troops in the central highlands.

Like Mrs. Ut, he echoed the official policy line heard so often during the Vietnam War — Americans are good people but were misguided by a bad government. Despite the standard response, neither they nor any Vietnamese encountered exhibited any signs of hostility towards Americans.

2nd mafia suspect murdered in Sicily

PALERMO, Sicily (R) — The second mafia suspect to die within two days was found murdered in a small town near Palermo, police said Saturday.

The body of Gaetano Buscemi, a 29-year-old florist with a record of mafia crime, was found with his arms and legs strapped behind his back in Villabate, 20 kilometres from the Sicilian capital.

Police said Buscemi had

probably been abducted and strangled Friday.

He was believed to have been a friend of Giovanni Spataro, who was shot dead Friday by four men disguised as police who flagged him down while he was riding his motorcycle through Villabate.

A spate of mafia murders has now claimed at least 15 lives since late February following two years of relative peace on the island.

local Di Peri clan, judicial sources said.

Last month, 46-year-old Giuseppe Di Peri and his son Salvatore, 23, also from Villabate, were shot dead in their car as they drove up to the family home.

A spate of mafia murders has now claimed at least 15 lives since late February following two years of relative peace on the island.



A firefighter uses a tree branch to beat out a fire after a cargo jet crashed into homes near La Aurora International Airport (AFP photo)

6 die as Guatemalan jet crashes into homes

GUATEMALA CITY (AFP) — A cargo plane slid off the runway Friday and crashed into a group of homes after landing at La Aurora International Airport, killing at least six people on the ground, aviation officials said.

Seven others were injured when the DC-8 cargo jet from a Guatemalan transport company landed on a wet runway at 11:40 (1740 GMT) and exploded in flames in the

Santa Fe neighbourhood, a group of homes near the runway.

The dead included a six-year-old girl, a 20-year-old male and a baby born in an ambulance moments after the mother was injured in the fire.

The cause of the accident was unknown, but officials declined to rule out pilot error.

"Because the runway was wet, it appears that the pilot came down too fast and could

not stop," said aviation director Julio Godoy.

Earlier reports said the plane was a Boeing 707 but Godoy said that was inaccurate. The pilot and two crew members of the aircraft belonging to Lincas Aereas Mayas were rescued.

"We neighbourhood residents rescued the crew — two pilots and an assistant — but two girls and an adult were killed when the plane hit a house," one witness said.

Kazakhs vote on president's call for longer term

ALMA-ATA (R) — President Nursultan Nazarbayev, voting in a poll expected to extend his term into the 21st century, said Saturday he would organise more referendums to decide other major questions facing Kazakhstan.

Mr. Nazarbayev, former Kazakhstan Communist Party boss who became the first national leader after the former Soviet republic became independent, looked relaxed and confident as he turned up in an Alma-Ata polling station with his wife Tsara.

"After the referendum the first task will be to develop democracy, modernise the economy, develop the democratic processes which we have begun," he said as the couple cast ballots two hours after polling opened at 8 a.m. (0100 GMT).

"There will be other referendums — we shall talk about that tomorrow when the results of this referendum are known," Mr. Nazarbayev told reporters.

The 54-year-old president was clearly suggesting that key legislation on private land ownership and the status of the Russian language would be decided by a popular vote if, as expected, his term is prolonged until December 2000.

Ethnic Kazakhs form less than half of the country's population. The rest are Russian speakers belonging to different ethnic groups.

Opinion polls suggest Mr. Nazarbayev, dominant figure for more than a decade in the vast, oil and mineral-rich territory, will secure clear endorsement from Kazakhstan's nine million voters.

Kazakh musicians played traditional stringed instruments and groups of dancing girls in sumptuous national dress swirled under blazing sunshine on the steps of the

building, adding to a holiday mood as Mr. Nazarbayev cast his vote.

Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency said in many polling stations in the capital and in regional centres, as many as half the electorate had voted during the first three hours of polling.

Mr. Nazarbayev, who was to have faced presidential elections in December 1996, has staked success on his unrivalled authority and his claim to be a guarantor of stability.

Five influential groups have declared they back him.

But several other movements, including Russian and Kazakh nationalist parties, charge that Mr. Nazarbayev is trying to install a dictatorship.

The referendum, called last month during a constitutional crisis which has left the country without a parliament, has also stirred

among his backers in the West.

The United States says Mr. Nazarbayev has taken a step backwards from democracy.

Some people interviewed on the streets Saturday echoed similar disquiet. Mikhail Semyonov, a 70-year-old ethnic Russian war veteran, said: "I do not hate traitors. But Nazarbayev has betrayed once and he will do it ten times."

"He betrayed Communist ideals first when he was the first Communist of the republic," said Mr. Semyonov.

Rakhmet, 39, who declined to give his surname, said: "I voted against. Elections in 1996 would have been better. I don't mind Nazarbayev but I do not like the process of dissolving parliament."

The outline of the final result should be clear by mid-

Deng reported ill, but out of danger

HONG KONG (R) — China's aged paramount leader Deng Xiaoping was ill but was not in danger, the South China Morning Post newspaper said Saturday. Speculation about the frail 90-year-old leader's health intensified this week after reports that his children were staying close to him. The Post quoting unnamed sources as saying Mr. Deng's condition had been poor but had now stabilised. He was still able to walk with assistance but had trouble speaking, it said.

Churchill's grandson wins on lottery — again

LONDON (AFP) — Conservative MP Winston Churchill won £40 (\$60) on the National Lottery Friday two days after receiving £13 million (\$20 million) from lottery funds for his grandfather's papers. The grandson of British World War II leader Winston Churchill bought two winning tickets at a newsagent's in the northern city Manchester. A political row developed Thursday over the government's payment of more than £13 million in National Lottery profits to buy the wartime prime minister's archives for his grandson.

Delors to get Japan's highest award

TOKYO (AFP) — Former European Commission Chairman Jacques Delors will be among the recipients of Japan's highest official award, the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, officials said Saturday. Frenchman Delors, 69, will receive the award for his contribution to the development of economic relations between Japan and Europe, they said. The annual award ceremony will be held on May 8 at the Imperial Palace here. Polish film director Andrzej Wajda, also 69, will receive the third highest Order of the Rising Sun for his contribution to the promotion of cultural exchanges, the officials said.

Bush visits Normandy beaches

CAEN, France (AFP) — Former U.S. President George Bush visited the Normandy beaches which were the site of the D-Day landings in 1944, officials said. Accompanied by his wife Barbara, Mr. Bush spent nearly an hour of the private visit at the U.S. military cemetery at Colleville, near Omaha Beach, where some 10,000 soldiers are buried. He also visited Bayeux and La Pointe du Hoc, situated between Omaha Beach and Utah Beach, during the visit, which was kept secret for security reasons, the officials said.

Pipe smokers' championship to test endurance

PARIS (AP) — Pipe lovers will test their smoking skills at the first annual pipe smokers' championship in the French Alps. France has long been considered a smoker's paradise; nearly three-fourths of the population smoke. But the pleasure doesn't stop at being free to smoke in restaurants and other public places without scorn. The Saint-Claude Pipe Club is holding its three-day "Europe 95" show beginning Saturday to promote the puffing medium, particularly St. Claude's own. In the championship Monday, it will provide competitors with one heather pipe, a pipe stuffer, three grams of tobacco, and two matches. The smokers will have 5 minutes to prepare their pipes and one minute to light up. The winner is the one who is able to keep his or her pipe going the longest without relighting. The current record to beat for such a feat is 3 hours 9 minutes and 3 seconds. Aside from all the competitive hoopla, the participants can take part in pipe craftsmanship demonstrations, exhibitions and round table discussions on the passions, history, and the art of pipemaking.

Deng reported ill, but out of danger

HONG KONG (R) — Deng Xiaoping was ill, but was not in danger, the South China Morning Post newspaper said Saturday. The newspaper reported that the 86-year-old leader had been in bed for several days, but was now able to walk with a cane. The paper also reported that Deng had been in good health for several days before he fell ill.

Churchill's grandson wins on lottery — age

LONDON (AFP) — Winston Churchill's grandson, Lord Nicholas, has won the £10 million (US\$15 million) National Lottery jackpot. Lord Nicholas, 31, is the youngest winner in the history of the lottery. He won the jackpot by purchasing a ticket with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and a lucky number of 49.

Delors to get Japan's highest award

PARIS (AFP) — Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, is to receive the Order of the Rising Sun, one of Japan's highest honors, for his role in promoting European integration. The award was presented to him by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on Saturday.

Bush visits Normandy beaches

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President George H.W. Bush visited the Normandy beaches on Saturday to mark the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings. He was accompanied by his wife Barbara and their children. Bush spent time at the Utah Beach Memorial and the American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer.

Pipe smokers' championship test: endurance

PARIS (AFP) — A group of pipe smokers in Paris are competing in a "championship" test of endurance. The test involves smoking a pipe for as long as possible without taking a break. The winner will receive a trophy and a cash prize.



Hutu refugees wait in the school of the Kibeho camp where some 1,000 displaced persons still remain. Despite the lack of food and water at the camp, the refugees obstinately refused to return to their home villages for fear of further attacks by the army (AFP photo)

U.N. opposes Zaire move on Rwanda refugees

KIGALI (Agencies) — U.N. and aid workers Saturday expressed concern over the possibility that Zaire might expel over 100,000 Hutu refugees to Rwanda where a U.N. envoy was already investigating another ethnic massacre. The flight of the Hutus to Zaire after the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) won last year's civil war was described then as an exodus of Biblical proportions during which hundreds died of exhaustion, malnutrition and disease. Zaire's parliament Friday called on its government to expel the Hutus unconditionally, a call backed by several ministers in the government. "The position of the United Nations is that repatriation should be voluntary and conducted within safe means," Sammy Kumbi Bwo, a spokesman for the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) told Reuters. "We continue to believe that this (Rwanda) is a humanitarian crisis and the principle of voluntary repatriation should be respected," he added. Chris Bowers, a spokesman for the UNHCR in Rwanda, said Zaire should respect international conventions on refugees, to which it is a signatory, and only send back refugees voluntarily. "Our objective is voluntary repatriation and the Zairean government has committed itself to international agreements on this issue," Mr. Bowers told Reuters. But the international char-

ity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF-Doctors Without Borders) pointed out that last week's carnage at Kibeho camp in the southwest of Rwanda, where thousands of Hutus, shot by government troops or killed in panic-stricken stampedes, would discourage people from returning to Rwanda. "It's unlikely that these people (refugees) will want to come back in the near future after what happened last week," MSF spokeswoman Samantha Boulton said. On Saturday, a U.N. special envoy Aldo Ajello was to travel to Kibeho to investigate last Saturday's carnage and to try to persuade about 1,000 Hutus holding out there to go home. Journalists put the number there at 1,000 although aid workers had earlier said it was a few hundred. Troops have cut off supplies to the camp, one of nine holding about 250,000 Hutus whom the government wants to return to their homes. Mr. Ajello's Kibeho trip, scheduled for early Saturday, was put off until the afternoon, UNAMIR officials said. In neighbouring Zaire, where the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates 1.2 million Rwandan refugees are living, the parliamentary report for expulsion was being passed to the government of Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo for action. It was not immediately clear how the government would respond to the call but Justice Minister Gerard Kamanda Wa Kamanda said the Rwandans could not be allowed to stay forever. "We cannot be responsible for organising the reintegration of the Rwandan refugees into Zairean society," he told deputies concerned about international reaction to such a move. Meanwhile, Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi has backed a controversial proposal to separate Hutus and Tutsis in a bid to end bloodletting in the small central African nations of Rwanda and Burundi. Kenyan press reports Saturday said Mr. Moi declared that it had been impossible to resolve the conflict between the two ethnic groups by other means and massacres were continuing. "One way of solving the problem would be for all the Hutus to settle in Burundi and all the Tutsis in Rwanda, or vice versa," Mr. Arap Moi said, speaking Friday in Embu, 100 kilometres (60 miles) north of Nairobi. One Western diplomat here described the idea as "iconoclastic and dangerous," stressing that it breached the African post-independence principle of the inviolability of borders established in colonial times. Rwanda was gripped by a three-month-long genocidal civil war last year, in which more than 500,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred by Hutu extremists. Before the war, like Burundi, it had an ethnic mix of 85 per cent Hutus and 14 per cent Tutsis, for respective overall population of

Fighting, shelling rock Sarajevo, Bihac; diplomats seek new truce

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Fighting and shelling rocked Sarajevo and the Bihac enclave Saturday, while relative calm reigned elsewhere in Bosnia, two days before the end of a much-violated four-month truce here which diplomats of the major powers are seeking to save. Several tank rounds impacted in the Hrasnica suburbs of Sarajevo and on the Igman road leading out of the city, Sarajevo Radio, though no casualties were reported. Heavy machine-gun duels were heard by AFP correspondents overnight from the frontline Jewish Cemetery on the left bank of the Miljacka River that runs through the besieged city. U.N. protected Bihac town, in the northwestern Bihac enclave, was hit by nine shell rounds overnight Friday and six rounds impacted in "safe areas" around the town. U.N. Protection Force spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward said. "We think the BSA (Bosnian Serb Army) and BSK (Bosnian Serb Krajina) are responsible," for shelling the town and its outskirts, he said, adding that fighting was continuing Saturday south and southwest of the area. Sarajevo Radio reported Howitzer, tank and cannon fire against Bosnian army lines close to Bihac since early Saturday and said several people, some of them children, had been wounded in Bihac town in Friday's shelling. Serb radio, broadcasting from the Serb stronghold of Pale outside Sarajevo reported that two young girls had been wounded in Hadzice southwest of the city by Bosnian mortar fire. With the fighting continuing, envoys of five major powers met in Paris for three hours Friday apparently seeking to devise a formula of sanctions measures and agreements to unblock a new and effective ceasefire for Bosnia. Diplomats and military analysts here blamed lack of political progress on why the current ceasefire, which runs out officially at noon (1000 GMT) Monday, had failed to hold. A French Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said the so-called "contact group" which met in Paris Friday — Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — would meet again Wednesday in London and Friday in Paris seeking "mutual recognition between the states of

the former Yugoslavia." Asked in Belgrade Friday on the likelihood of Mr. Milosevic, original patron of the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, recognising Bosnia-Herzegovina, EU mediator said simply: "There is a dialogue going on and we'll have to wait and see." Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic has promised to agree to a new truce if Mr. Milosevic recognises his country and applies pressure on the breakaway Serbs to end their siege of Sarajevo and agree to the international peace plan. The plan, put forward last year, awards the Serb rebels led by Mr. Karadzic 49 per cent of the country with the remainder for the majority Muslim-Croat federation. A Serb tank fired two shells into the house shortly after noon Thursday. Two people were badly burned and one of them had to be transferred to hospital at Zenica, one of the main towns in central Bosnia. UNPROFOR spokesman Major Hervé Gourmelon said. Under the Geneva conventions, phosphorous shells can only be used to destroy obstacles in the path of troops and not against soldiers in battle, still less against civilians. U.N. staff and the International Committee of the Red Cross were investigating the incident, Maj. Gourmelon said. In Croatia separatist Serbs killed four Croatian motorists on a highway crossing ceasefire lines Saturday in retaliation for the murder of a Serb by an embittered Croatian refugee, U.N. officials said. Five other Croatians in cars peppered with Serb gunfire on the E-70 Motorway were unaccounted for and U.N. officials said they might have been detained by rebel militiamen demanding the return of the slain Serb's body. The motorway, reopened in December under a U.N.-mediated accord, was closed after the outbreak of armed violence — a setback to the three-year-old U.N. effort to reconcile Croats and the rebel Serb minority in the ex-Yugoslav republic.



A Sarajevo couple runs across "sniper avenue" in the centre of Sarajevo, after snipers opened fire on a U.N. bus passing by. Nobody was wounded in the incident (AFP photo)

More Aum sect followers arrested in Japan

TOKYO (AFP) — Three more followers of the Aum Supreme Truth religious cult, suspected in last month's deadly sarin gas attack here, were arrested Saturday, police said. Koichi Ishikawa, 26, was arrested on suspicion of forcibly confining an Aum member who tried to defect from the doomsday sect, while Yasuhiro Senoo, 30, was apprehended for allegedly helping to hide a sect member wanted by police on abduction charges. Yoshiaki Tanabe, 33, was arrested on suspicion of violating the wireless and telegraphy act, police said, without elaborating. News reports said Mr. Ishikawa was believed to be Aum founder and guru Shoko Asahara's chief secretary. Earlier Saturday, police arrested Shinya Asano, a member of the Aum sect, on suspicion of attempting to

steal address lists from a driving license office in Tokyo last year. Mr. Asano, 26, was discharged Friday from his post as a sergeant of the Self-Defence Forces (SDF) on allegations that he had leaked confidential information to the Aum sect. His arrest came a day after Takahisa Shirai, another SDF sergeant, was arrested for allegedly throwing a firebomb at Aum's headquarters in an effort to disrupt police investigation. Police refused to disclose the total number of Aum followers so far arrested, but news reports put it at more than 100. Aum is suspected of carrying out a sarin gas attack on Tokyo's subway system on March 20, which left 12 people dead and some 5,500 others injured.

Balladur hailed at mass Chirac rally

PARIS (R) — Defeated French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur was cheered at Gaullist rival Jacques Chirac's biggest presidential campaign rally Saturday in a display of conservative unity eight days before the decisive run-off vote. Mr. Balladur, who broke off a holiday at his Alpine chalet to demonstrate support for his former mentor, arrived with some of his closest supporters — Budget Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, Defence Minister Francois Leotard and Social Affairs Minister Simone Veil.



French Socialist candidate to the presidential elections Lionel Jospin (centre) is greeted by a crowd of well-wishers upon his arrival to a campaign meeting in Mont-De-Marsan, southwestern France. According to recent opinion

The crowd estimated by organisers at 20,000 in a giant tent pitched in Paris's Bois de Boulogne park broke into rhythmic chants of "Doudou, Doudou" — the childhood nickname Mr. Balladur's campaign managers revived to give him a less bourgeois image. Mr. Chirac, due to speak later in the afternoon, was not there to greet the 65-year-old prime minister, who won 18.6 per cent of the vote in last Sunday's first round, narrowly failing to beat Mr. Chirac on 20.8 per cent for the second place in the run-off.

The 62-year-old Paris mayor is favourite to win next Sunday's second ballot against Socialist underdog Lionel Jospin. An opinion poll released Saturday, the 1st day on which polls may be published, showed Mr. Chirac leading 54-46 per cent to 18 per cent of the electorate still undecided. Mr. Balladur was seated between National Assembly speaker Philippe Seguin, one of his harshest Gaullist critics, and Senate Speaker Rene Monory. Hardline Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, who decried Mr. Chirac to support Balladur's candidacy in January, was also cheered on arrival. But there were

sporadic jeers at the announcement of Mr. Sarkozy and Mr. Leotard's names. To complete the show of conservative unity, former President Valery Giscard d'Estaing and right-wing anti-Maastricht maverick Philippe De Villiers, who won 4.7 per cent in the first round, were given places of honour.

Only former conservative Prime Minister Raymond Barre, Mr. Chirac's unsuccessful conservative rival in the 1988 presidential election, was missing, on a long-planned lecture trip to Poland. Many Chirac supporters, driven in by bus from across France, carried banners with his apple-tree logo. Former French Olympic hurdler Guy Druet, the first speaker, warned supporters: "A race is never won until it's over." Musicians Jean-Michel Jar-

re and Michel Sardou, as well as actress Claudia Cardinale, pledged their backing for the candidate. Choreographer Maurice Bejart sent a videotaped message of support. The conservative newspaper Le Figaro said Mr. Chirac, a two-time prime minister making his third bid for the presidency, had reached "presidential altitudes" by proving he could re-unite the right without tying his hands and falling hostage to anyone.

Mr. Jospin's most authoritative backers set out to dismiss Mr. Chirac's charges that Mr. Jospin, a former education minister, lacked statesmanlike experience and was a lover of President Francois Mitterrand's controversial 14-year rule. Mr. Mitterrand came to the rescue. He said in a message read at a Jospin rally in southwest France Friday

night that Mr. Jospin "is able to preside tomorrow over the destiny of the republic with his known qualities and competence." Mr. Jospin denied that Mr. Mitterrand, who has so far paid lip service to his presidential bid, was only lukewarm. "We phone each other, we see each other, we write to each other. Let everyone be reassured, we are together," he told the rally.

Former European Commission President Jacques Delors said Mr. Jospin could open a new chapter in French history. But Mr. Delors, who was favourite for the presidency before deciding against running last December, was non-committal on speculation that he could become Mr. Jospin's premier. "There is room for everyone in tomorrow's France," he said in an interview with the newspaper Le Monde,

Chechen truce holds despite sporadic attacks

SLEPTSOVSK, Russia (R) — Russian forces in Chechnya said they were attacked several times by separatist rebels overnight and Saturday morning, but a shaky truce introduced Friday appeared to be holding. Interfax News Agency quoted the Russian command in Chechnya as saying four servicemen had been badly wounded when the rebels shelled Russian positions near the village of Nozhai-Yurt around 6 a.m. (0200 GMT). Two of the men later died in hospital, it said. The news agency said a Russian post in the Chechen capital Grozny was attacked soon after midnight (2000 GMT Friday) while another post in the town of Shali in the east came under mortar fire. No one was hurt, Interfax said. Interfax did not say if the Russians returned fire in any of the incidents. The Russian military told the agency their troops "strictly observed the truce." The agency's report could not be independently confirmed. Sporadic artillery shooting could be heard Saturday in the settlement of Sleptsovsk outside Chechnya's western border coming from the separatist stronghold of Bamut 25 kilometres away. Reporters were not allowed to approach Bamut, where Chechen rebels have been resisting Russian attacks for three months. President Boris Yeltsin has ordered his troops to cease fire in Chechnya until May 12 to avoid fighting during celebrations in Moscow of the allied victory over Nazi Germany, due to be attended by 50 world leaders.



A Russian soldier carrying a grenade launcher walks up a hill to take position at a checkpoint near Bamut (AFP photo)

The rebels and Russian commanders held talks Friday in the village of Novye Atagi south of Grozny. But the outcome of the meeting showed that there was still little ground for a long-term political settlement in the volatile region. Interfax Friday quoted officials from the southern region of Ingushetia, bordering Chechnya, as saying Chechen military commander Aslan Maskhadov and Russian General Gennady Troshchev agreed at the talks to exchange wounded and prisoners of war. But they said Mr. Maskhadov refused to formally join the truce and reiterated demands for the withdrawal of the Russian troops, sent last December to quell Chechnya's independence bid. Russian independent NTV television Friday quoted Gen. Troshchev as saying the rebels also refused to lay down their arms, rejecting the demand which Moscow sees as a precondition for a political settlement. The Interfax and NTV reports could not be independently confirmed. Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said that if no political solution is found by May 12 hostilities would resume. NTV said that despite the truce Russians continued Friday to concentrate special forces capable of fighting rebels in the southern mountainous region — the last bastion of the separatists squeezed out from northern and central Chechnya. A fighter from Bamut told Reuters Friday that the rebels were also preparing for fresh fighting.

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Saturday a ceasefire ordered by Moscow in Chechnya could be extended beyond the original deadline of May 12, RIA news agency said. "The moratorium on military action in Chechnya might be extended beyond the May holidays," the agency quoted Mr. Chernomyrdin as saying. "I have stated before and state now that we are ready to hold talks with armed units opposing Russian troops in Chechnya," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Mr. Chernomyrdin as telling a meeting of his new political bloc, which aims to run in December parliamentary elections. "We are ready not only to have talks but also to cease fire. We have proposed to introduce a moratorium on combat actions and this covered not only the period up to May 10-11," he said.

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One-eyed security

THE TORTURE to death by Israel of a Palestinian detainee suspected of being a member of Hamas is in no way surprising given the green light that had been officially given to Shin Beth security interrogators to resort to whatever force necessary when questioning Arab suspects. Even before last November's decision to grant Shin Beth "more leeway" in interrogating Palestinian activists, Israeli security agents were allowed to use "moderate physical pressure" on detainees, a euphemism for using physical and mental duress against Palestinians when in custody.

The extent to which Israel is prepared to go in its violent crusade against perceived threats to its security and the safety of its citizens can be better gauged when the lax guidelines accorded Israeli interrogators and their accomplices, Palestinian collaborators, are examined in light of additional information linking Israel to a broader and well-coordinated effort to combat and destroy Palestinian opposition groups wherever they are found. Israeli Major General Ilan Biran was more than blunt when he told the Israeli daily newspaper, Haaretz, Friday that his troops must kill more wanted Palestinians. "We suppose there are still four or five squads we must kill," the general admitted to the newspaper without a token of reservation.

The total picture, therefore, becomes clearer every day about Israeli intentions to kill or torture to death Palestinians opposed to the peace process. A couple of weeks ago, three Palestinians were shot point blank by plain-clothed Israeli agents in broad daylight because they were suspected of being members of a Palestinian extremist faction poised to strike at Israeli targets.

Must we remind Israel that there may be acceptable ways to combat violence and there are methods that are not. Killing suspects right, left and centre is not exactly the proper way to prevent violence because that could be counter-productive. Likewise, torturing detainees is not something that the international community would condone no matter how grave the threat is.

Israel prides itself as having ratified two important human rights treaties. But an examination of how the Israelis are applying the accords would make current Israeli policies and practices with regard to Palestinians unquestionably illegal under both domestic and international law. The Jewish state cannot continue to brag about its deep and unwavering commitment to democracy and the rule of law as long as it persists in treating Palestinians so brutally and unlawfully.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON a visit to Jordan by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright on Tuesday, May 2, a writer in Al Ra'i daily said that the American visitor would not find a true friend among the ordinary Jordanian citizens. Why does Ms. Albright want to visit us, when she always provokes the feelings of the Arab people and describes Israel's confiscation of Arab land around Jerusalem as a legal act? asked Tareq Masarweh. Ms. Albright's announcement of her planned visit came on the day when she turned down a request by Royal Jordanian Airlines to transport Libyan pilgrims to Mecca and as the Arab masses condoned to hear her talking about U.N. sanctions against the Iraqis and expressing satisfaction with Israel's continued closure of the occupied Arab lands, said the writer. Ms. Albright's actions, he said, reflect her hatred of the Arabs and Muslims, whom she is visiting in the coming week against their will.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily urged the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the concerned Arab governments to raise the question of Israel's continued drive to confiscate Arab lands around Jerusalem at the U.N. Security Council. A recent Israeli government decision to confiscate 53 hectares of Arab land to build settlements could help Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to win votes in the Israeli parliamentary elections but certainly the move is bound to erode any remaining hope that Israel would implement U.N. resolutions and give up occupied Arab lands, said Mahmoud Rimawi.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Jordanian-Israeli legal entity to run Jordan Valley proposed

THE MAIN difficulty that delays starting the development of the Jordan Rift Valley is, of course, lack of funding. But even if, by any chance, financing becomes available, a main obstacle facing the implementation of joint projects on both sides of the Jordan Valley is that institutions and enterprises, interested in studying, financing, or implementing any project, do not know if they have to enter into contract with Jordan, or Israel, or with both countries individually or collectively.

Legal complications arise not only at the level of contracting but also during implementation. How the international contractor, for instance, should behave if he receives a change order from Jordan. Should he comply or wait for an Israeli consent. What if he receives contradicting instruction. If there would be loans, which party would have the right to withdraw funds, or to guarantee the loans or, more importantly, will shoulder the obligation to repay.

On October 1994, the World Bank issued a report under the title: "Integrated Development of the Jordan Rift Valley." The report suggested to the parties to decide, at an appropriate time, on a developed management structure, including a legal entity that would assume legal and fiduciary responsibilities for the administration of the programme. Examples of the inter-country cooperation over project development are: Indus River Commission, Canada-USA Great Lakes Commission, and Mexico-USA border area.

The proposed legal entity may act on behalf of all parties. It can be a full-fledged supra-national body created by an international treaty, or a development corporation

with shares owned by the parties.

Such entity is extremely important with far reaching consequences, because the projects talked about, if implemented, will cost billions of dollars.

The entity is not merely a committee of experts, charged with simple coordination. It is a permanent authority, as the implementation of some projects takes up to 10 years, followed by operation for unlimited time.

The political, administrative and legal complications of this entity are obvious. However, the main risk is that of borrowing money under the several or joint guarantee of Jordan. In that case we may repeat our bitter experience of financing development by debt, which may lead Jordan to another crisis but at a larger scale.

Israel is already debt-ridden with tens of billions of dollars. A few billions more will not change the picture radically. Israel does not have to worry about the burden of debt service because the American aid will continue to take care of settling its obligations. The balance is payable to the Israeli treasury by cheque on the first day of November each year, but who will settle the debts of Jordan as they fall due. Can the projects pay for themselves?

The Jordanian economy is less than one tenth of the Israeli economy. It is not known how the debt burden of the Jordan Rift Valley development can be shared on 50/50 basis.

The bi-state authority, proposed by the World Bank, is a big issue which has to be studied thoroughly, and discussed deeply, before we get involved in something that may turn out to be a financial and political trap.

The second bomb of Oklahoma City

By Mustafa Tell

WHEN I first heard the news about the Oklahoma City bombing and the children who were killed in the day care centre, I couldn't help but remember the children I used to work with when I worked at a day care centre as a student at the University of South Florida, Tampa. I remembered how innocent and pure were the children and how different they were from the society outside. The children at that day centre, just like children all over the world, did not hate. They were too young to understand the hatred, bigotry, sexism and racism of their parents, society and culture. I took refuge in that day care centre even when I didn't have to work. That day care centre became my shelter from the ugly world of grown ups outside of it. It also gave me hope for the future; hope that some of the children will keep their innocence and purity as they grow up. For me, that meant that there will always be hope as long as there are children out there. When I heard that someone had killed that boy in Oklahoma City I was overwhelmed with sadness for the families who lost their loved ones and for all of us who witnessed another blow to humanity.

My grief for the children, their families and for all of us was interrupted by waves and waves of hatred and racism that came through the U.S. media reports about the bomb. I spent the night listening to people saying that my mother, who gave birth to me, and to my sister, does not "value life as Americans do." As for my father, who spends his time in hospitals trying to help people as a doctor, the "experts" in the U.S. media were telling me that he is an "animal" who does not "deserve to live." I heard U.S. politicians saying that my nieces Zaina (9) and Aliya (2) "need to be punished severely." Even my sadness was interpreted as "crocodile tears" and I was told that "people like me" are not worthy to grieve for the American people. My fault and my family's was that we did not grow up watching baseball games eating apple pies. We are Arabs and that was enough reason for the media, the "experts," the politicians and the people in the United States to blame us for the Oklahoma City bombing and then hate us for it!

Well, Surprise. We did not do it. Sorry, said the media, the "experts," the politicians and the people in the U.S. We are sorry because we wanted to "ship you back to where you belong."

We are sorry because we wanted to put you in concentration camps.

We are sorry because we wanted to bomb your homeland.

We are sorry because we doubted your humanity. Well, surprise. That is not enough. It is not enough because the feelings, the hatred and the racism expressed in the U.S. media on Wednesday and on Thursday (19, 20, April) were not that different from the views of the people whom the FBI believes are behind the bombing. Yet, we are told by the U.S. media, the "experts" and the politicians in the U.S. that the Oklahoma City bombing is an "individual" and "crazy" act. The hatred expressed by these "individuals" crazy" act is the same hatred we heard on Wednesday and on Thursday coming out from the media, the "experts," the politicians and the people in the U.S. That is very alarming. The people of the U.S.A. need help. Then don't need more anti-terrorist laws. They don't need more prisons and law enforcement agencies. What they need is a deep look inside a system that is built on hatred and racism. The Arabs and the Muslims in the U.S. and in the world, do not need apologies from the American people. They need understanding and respect just like all the people of the world. It is this country and the people of this country that need the apologies. The media, the "experts" and the politicians in the U.S. need to apologise because they built a country

full of hate and racism. There is no future for a country with so much hate and racism as there is today in the U.S. Just take a look at Nazi Germany and learn.

We all value life and the lives of children all over the world. If the media, the "experts" and the politicians in the U.S. are trying to monopolise humanity for "Americans," they are wrong. There is no difference between a mother in Rwanda who travelled hundreds of miles on foot to find a safe place for her kids and mothers in the U.S. The Iraqi parent who came out of a bombed shelter holding his dead son in his hands is not different from the fire fighter who carried the dead child out of the Oklahoma City federal building. The tears that drop from Lebanese mothers, Israeli mothers, Palestinian mothers, Bosnian mothers, Angolan mothers, Sudanese mothers, Guatemalan mothers, Nicaraguan mothers, Sri Lankan mothers and mothers all over the world are not different from the tears of the Oklahoma City mothers. Let that be the lesson of Oklahoma City bombing so we can put out the racist and hatred bomb that exploded afterward.

Mustafa Tell is a Jordanian Journalist living in Minneapolis/U.S.A. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Israeli leaders' failure to make 'imaginative leap' for peace threatens Oslo accord

Michael Jansen

IN A major and highly significant address to American Jewish leaders in the U.S., Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Friday that Israel had reached its "security border along the Jordan" in 1967 and achieved its essential "strategic depth." Mr. Peres said that Gaza had no security significance and that "all that remained to be decided was who should rule over the people" in the West Bank.

This revealing statement, reported Friday by Israel Radio in its English bulletin, makes it clear that Mr. Peres, the architect of the Oslo accord with the Palestinians, has no intention of fulfilling the terms of that accord, especially when it comes to the two fundamental issues of withdrawal and self-rule for the Palestinians.

According to Article 1 of that accord, the aim of the negotiations in the peace process was, ultimately, to achieve a permanent status agreement which would "lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338." Resolution 242 makes it clear that the withdrawal should take into account the prin-

ple that the "acquisition of territory by war" is "inadmissible" and, therefore, that Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 should be total or near total.

If, however, Israel intends to retain control of the West Bank and to permanently fix its "security border along the Jordan," there can be no implementation of these resolutions.

If one adds Mr. Peres' latest pronouncement to a statement made last July during a visit to Cyprus, it becomes clear that the position of the present Labour leadership on the issue of withdrawal mirrors that of the previous hardline Likud government. At that time Mr. Peres stated, in reply to a question during a press conference, that Israel had complied with the provisions of Resolution 242 when it withdrew from Sinai, which amounted to 80 per cent of the territories occupied in 1967.

It would seem that Israel sees its evacuation of 60 per cent of the Gaza Strip as an additional, most generous territorial concession in realisation of the withdrawal provisions of Resolution 242 with respect to the Palestinian occupied terri-

ories.

Mr. Peres' assertion that "all that remained to be decided was who should rule over the people" in the West Bank also contradicted the terms of the Oslo accord, which states as the first aim of negotiations that an "elected Interim Palestinian Self-Governing Authority" should assume that responsibility "in order that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip may govern themselves according to democratic principles."

Mr. Peres' statement makes it clear that Israel has only been using Palestinian "terrorist" attacks — the lack of security for Israelis — as a means for stalling on the implementation of the provisions of the Oslo accord calling for "redeployment" of Israeli troops "outside populated areas" and the holding of elections. That shows Israel has no intention of ultimately withdrawing from the West Bank and ending the occupation, without which, the Arabs insist, there can be no comprehensive regional settlement.

The fact that these remarks came from the "man of peace" and the "architect of the Oslo accord," on the Israeli side,

demonstrates that he is not prepared to depart from the messianic Zionist ideology which seeks the creation of greater Israel on all of Palestine. Labour politicians, however, try to camouflage their adherence to this ideology by staking their claim on the basis of "security borders" and "strategic depth," two concepts made obsolete by modern weapons technology.

Many years ago a wise Israeli military man, the late general Yehoshafat Harkabi, told this correspondent that his people would never begin to treat the Palestinians fairly or strive to reach a just settlement with the Arabs until Israel stopped speaking of "we" and "ours" all the time. They had to make the leap of imagination that put them into someone else's shoes and enable them to see a problem from the other's point of view, he said. It is clear that the men who framed the Oslo accord — which might have launched a true settlement process — have not yet made that leap of imagination. Instead they still speak only of "we" and "ours" and have no intention of "sharing" Palestine with its native people.

LETTERS

'Quick fixes' that fix nothing

To the Editor:

I WAS most encouraging to read your editorial comment "Tools for right use" (Jordan Times, April 26) about moves to amend the Traffic Law. It demonstrates understanding of what is required to improve Jordan's dreadful road safety record which, sadly, the responsible authorities do not seem to have grasped.

Following His Majesty the King's timely pronouncements on the subject, one could almost hear these authorities belatedly saying "Hello! We must do something." However, the something they have predictably resorted to is the easy option of passing new laws to "prove" that they're on the case. What it proves, in fact, is quite the opposite: That those whose formal responsibility it is to address the problems either do not understand those problems or do not regard them as worthy of considered attention designed to achieve genuine, long-term, solutions.

A comprehensive coordinated, continuing, effort is required on many fronts for many years if the deteriorating situation is to change. Instead, all the people of Jordan have so far been offered by those who should know better, but transparently do not, is a standard "quick fix" which may be quick but which will fix precious little.

It is most heartening to know that, in contrast to the formal authorities, there are those such as the Jordan Times and the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Accidents which share this opinion and which actually know what they are talking about. Perhaps, therefore, it is now time for these other concerned parties to increase the pressure on those who are officially entrusted with redressing the traffic situation... A national campaign, supported by the press and coordinated with schools and universities, could be just the thing to do the trick.

John Dales,
Amman.

Child or Monster?

To the Editor:

IT CAN be very boring to sit in a doctor's waiting room until it is your turn. Especially when you are a three year old boy.

Little Abed did his best, trying to find some interesting pictures in the magazines on the table. He was not very successful as the magazines mostly covered political, fashion, or household matters.

Suddenly he saw a little yellow sponge ball, and he started kicking it around happily. His father looked up from his newspaper, and scolded him. "If you won't put the ball immediately back where you found it, the doctor will come, and give you an injection."

I could not believe what I heard. From now on little Abed will be horrified of going to doctors, even though they just want to help him.

For a short while the little boy tried to sit still, but then his natural desire to move, and do something became too strong, and he started playing with the door handle. His mother, being completely absorbed by the latest fashion in a magazine hissed at Abed "If you don't stop that, the police, who is standing outside will put you in prison?"

Little Abed was stunned. So was I.

He ran back to his chair, and sat down, dangling his legs, looking around desperately to find something to occupy himself with, without facing terrifying consequences.

The colourful corner of the doctor's assistant equipped with all sorts of funny muppets, and decorated with cards caught the little boy's attention. He slowly moved to this inviting, and friendly place just looking at all the interesting things standing around, when again the stern voice of his father threatened him. "Come back here, and sit down, or the nurse will come and hit you!"

As everybody can imagine this was not the first time that I witnessed a situation like, or similar to this, and I ask myself what kind of people these children will become when they grow up full of fear of everything. Can't parents try to understand what's going on in their children's minds, put themselves in their position, instead of threatening them as if they were little monsters?

On April 12 a three day conference about children's rights started. I wonder if the results of this conference included also the rights of children to be brought up as little personalities, who are allowed moving around freely without being crippled inside by unnecessary fear.

Cece Masarweh,
Amman.

Turkey and the Kurds

To the Editor:

TURKEY WAS a main proponent of the military operation in northern Iraq to protect the Kurdish population there on "humanitarian" grounds.

Now the Turkish authorities declare, tongue in cheek, that they are determined to put an end to the resistance of the same group of "terrorists," i.e. the Kurds, at all costs. The invasion of a neighbouring country is thrown into the bargain.

Dr. Omar Nageh,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

LETTERS

Quick fixes' that fix nothing

Editor:

most encouraging to read your editorial on the subject of the Jordanian Law of the Press. It is a pity that the law is not being enforced. It is a pity that the law is not being enforced. It is a pity that the law is not being enforced.



Hutu women refugees stand in line for food at a refugee camp which refugees have started to leave for the Rwandan capital Kigali before the massacre (AFP photo)

By Terry Leonard
The Associated Press

Kibeho massacre will set back for years efforts to rebuild Rwanda

NAIROBI, Kenya — Rwanda's latest bloodletting has strengthened the hand of extremists who want to topple its government and set back for years efforts to rebuild the shattered country.

The killing of at least 2,000 refugees by government soldiers, and reports that more are being killed as they head home, has outraged donor governments and endangered the flow of badly needed aid.

The slaughter also damaged moves towards national reconciliation after last year's genocide, and sent a chilling message to more than 2 million refugees still outside the country that it may not be safe to return yet.

"Suddenly it seems there are no good guys in Rwanda," said Care spokesman Mark Richardson. "I don't know if it's a death knell, but some sort of bell is sounding for Rwanda."

So far, the government

has done little to shore up its credibility, shunned by the killings at Kibeho camp Saturday.

Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu has pledged to punish the guilty if an inquiry shows the army planned the attack. But President Pasteur Bizimungu has claimed that only 300 people were killed and that the army had been attacked.

"The government doesn't help itself by insisting that only 300 died at Kibeho when anyone with a television set knows the figure was much, much higher," said Care's Richardson.

Rwanda survives on foreign aid and expertise — and much of the aid has been tied to repatriating refugees outside of Rwanda. Without it, there would still be no electricity, no running water, no telephones.

There would be precious little food and medicine.

The Kibeho massacre, in a single stroke, endangered the flow of that aid.

The Netherlands announced it would suspend \$30 million in aid promised to Rwanda this year. The European Union (EU), which has given \$940 million in relief to Rwanda over the past year, is reassessing its policy.

The Kibeho massacre also could help extremist Hutu militiamen and former Hutu government soldiers to "make good on the threat to invade the country," said Ray Wilkinson, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The deaths confirm refugees' fears that they will not be safe at home, a fear that Hutu extremists have exploited to slow the return

of refugees and thwart reconciliation.

"The issue of reconciliation surely has been put on the back burner for the foreseeable future," Mr. Wilkinson said.

Just six months ago, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) had estimated it would take one to two years to repatriate the 2 million Rwandan refugees outside the country.

Because of Kibeho, that process will take years longer, said WFP spokeswoman Brenda Barton.

"Now, there is no end in sight," she said.

The WFP operation alone for the Rwanda crisis costs about \$1 million a day. Extending it and other relief efforts for years will cost staggering amounts of money.

"Who is going to come up with that kind of

money?" UNHCR's Wilkinson asked.

"I think the man on the street in London or somewhere else is going to throw up his arms in horror and say this just goes on and on and on," said Mr. Wilkinson. "He will say it doesn't seem to be worth it. We give our money and these people go on killing each other."

Donor fatigue already is a fact of life in Rwanda. Shaharyar Khan, the U.N. special envoy to Rwanda, said weeks before the massacre that the donors who pledged \$577 million in 1995 aid in January already were losing patience with the slow pace of change in Rwanda.

"This attack by soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) very seriously jeopardises the efforts at national reconciliation both

by the Rwandans themselves and by the international community," Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Andre Ouellet said in a statement.

"I remind the Rwandan authorities that it is their duty to establish a climate of confidence to encourage the return of refugees," said Mr. Ouellet.

Rwanda has announced it would intensify efforts to dismantle refugee camps inside its borders. But UNHCR officials point out it has not ensured their safety in their home villages.

That was underlined Tuesday by reports that at least nine refugees from the Kibeho area were killed on their return to their village and more than 1,000 have been imprisoned in a bank in the village of Ngenda.

"The government certainly has lost its credibility," said Mr. Wilkinson. "Lots of people have lost their lives. Reconciliation has been put on the back burner. Who has won anything? Nobody."

From the Arabic press

Why Islamists are accused of violence

The following article is translated from the Islamist weekly, *Al-Sabeel*. It was written in response to an article written by the newspaper's editor, Hilmi Al Asmar. Translations of selected articles from the Arabic Press will appear on this page on regular basis from now on.

By Mohammad Nawwaf Kasji

IN HIS column "more than just a word" that appeared in a previous issue of the Islamist weekly *Al-Sabeel*, Hilmi Al Asmar (the paper's chief editor) sought to investigate why Islamists are accused of violence, extremism and terrorism. Mr. Asmar tried hard to refute this accusation in an effort to prove it as being baseless.

I hope Mr. Asmar would permit me to express my opinion in this very delicate topic and to say frankly: Yes... Islamists are culprits. This, in my opinion, is based on solid facts.

First of all, I would beg Mr. Asmar to agree with me that there is a big difference, in meaning and concept, between the two words "Muslims" and "Islamists." Muslim are those who believe in Islam as a faith and a way of life. A Muslim is one who spares people any harm be it verbal or physical. Islamists, on the other hand, are those who understand Islam as a strict religion which not only negates all other ideologies but fights them. If we base our argument on this difference between Muslims as the ordinary faithful and Islamists as those who carry the sword and use terrorism and violence to propagate their cause, it would become easier to understand this attitude adopted by the West and by some Arab politicians towards Islam in general.

The West, brother Hilmi, does not incriminate Islam as a religion, and does not reject it as a faith. This is especially true since the West are pagan in nature and accepts millions of moderate Muslims who have been living in the West for decades. I have been one of them. I lived in West Germany, Denmark and Sweden. Many Muslims in the West have acquired the nationality of the countries they are living in and they perform their religious rites with complete freedom and dignity. They have the freedom to express their opinions and perform their rites as long as they stay away from violence and bloodshed.

You accuse "the politicians of this nation" that they do not confront those who accuse Islamists of being terrorists. I think you forgot what His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan have been saying in the United Nations, Washington, Paris and London... and ignored tens of seminars, speeches and press conferences where His Majesty and the Crown Prince exerted all efforts to explain Islamic principles, the glory of Islam and the humane nature of Islam and its call for democratic shura.

In my opinion and in the opinion of those who follow up western media, the bright picture that the King and Crown Prince drew about Islam in a civilised style and in a language understood by the West, had served Islam and Muslims millions of times more than what the assassins and murderers have done who you, Mr. Hilmi, are defending and calling "the nation's stars and moons." When I read the arguments you put forward to defend these people, my heart was filled with sadness and bitterness for this handicapped logic that comes from an intellectual who is supposed to lead the nation into the right path.

The world has changed, Mr. Hilmi. All over the globe, people condemn terrorism and violence... whether it was moral or physical. Islamic or Jewish. Violence in the 21st century is rejected and all of those who employ or promote it are rejected too. How then can you defend those who are responsible for seas of blood being shed in Algeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt and other places... In Algeria alone, and in less than three years, the Islamists have killed more than 30,000 Muslims and hundreds of foreigners.

The Algerian Islamists are in war with the government and not with the people. Why do they fight the Algerian people then? And why do they threaten the state's employees with liquidation if they went to their ministries, departments or institutions?

Why do they prevent the girls and boys from going to their schools and colleges? Which law and which religion sanctions its proponents to plant car bombs in populated areas in the heart of the cities killing tens of innocent citizens. Which law and which religion permit its leaders and followers to kidnap girls from schools and slaughter them like sheep and throw their decapitated heads on their colleagues at schools? Which law and which religion permit its followers to plant explosives in cinemas in Amman and Zarqa and detonate them on the heads of cinema goers? Which law and which religion let its followers kill tourists and foreign diplomats in Egypt, Algeria, Lahore, Kabul and the Philippines? When a deranged person shot the French diplomat in Wadi Al Mujib what did this ignorant achieve for his nation and for his religion?

Brother Hilmi you are trying to find an excuse for these people. You say: "If you find among the Islamists one who is taken by zeal or has committed some folly here or made a mistake there, he alone would be the one responsible for his own doing."

What is happening here is not only someone who is taken by zeal and is not a matter of a secluded incident of someone protesting injustice. What is happening here is that leaders, groups and institutions are recruiting members, arming them and setting them loose in this world to mess it up and fill it with terror and demolition. They are in Egypt, Algeria, Kabul, Lahore, Tehran, the Philippines and even in New York, Paris and London. They operate in every city and are present under all circumstances. They speak the same language, the language of violence, the language of the sword and bullet.

We are not looking here at some "individual practices". We are not dealing with one foolish or stupid action. We are dealing with leaders, fronts and organised groups that kill, slaughter and demolish, unfortunately in the name of Islam.

Can those be the nation's moons and stars? Is this what you are defending? Are those the messiahs who to straighten things, following eternal constitution of God? Is this what the eternal constitution asks them to do? Unfortunately the consequences of those people's actions do not befall them alone. No, they are infringing on Islam and Muslims. The world has changed my brother Hilmi. We are on the threshold of the 21st century and on this earth there are peoples, nations and other civilisations who have scientific and economic forces that no one can ignore. We are forced to live with them. And violence is no way for cohabitation these days. Violence, regardless of its form, is spurned, locally, nationally and internationally. Islamists do not employ but violence. And it is no wonder the world outcast them.

Child or Monster?

Editor:

The very thought of a child killing is a horror to most of us. But in the case of the child who killed the girl in the Jordanian capital, the horror is compounded by the fact that the child is a Muslim. The child is a Muslim. The child is a Muslim. The child is a Muslim.

Postal services get a ministry stamping

(Continued from page 1)

tion of the post office. We require that small change be available at all offices at all times... that all types of stamps are available at every office... that managers make sure that all scales are properly balanced... that employees do not stick the stamps on the letters... that all of our customers are treated kindly and with respect. Postal directors should make sure that these regulations are followed, otherwise severe measures will be taken against violators."

Hashem Qudah, undersecretary for the Ministry of Communications and Postal Affairs, sent a seven-page letter in response to the queries made by the Jordan Times. Mr. Qudah said he personally inspected a number of offices to assess the seriousness of the complaints. The post office has already taken decisive action against several employees to curb unscrupulous behaviour, he said, adding that the ministry also appointed new heads of departments to monitor employee behaviour.

Other ministry sources said that all office managers were being reshuffled as well in the hope that the efficiency of the offices would improve.

While the undersecretary's comment regarding the lack of change was limited to insisting that the post office should have all denominations at all times, another ministry official pointed out that customers often don't insist on their change — a disincentive for employees to keep it on hand.

"I agree that there is no excuse for not having change on hand, especially at most post offices are very close to banks. But, if customers don't insist," he

said, "employees won't learn that they have to have it at all times. We need the customer to start insisting."

The problem of missing and delayed mail, especially from the United States, is more difficult to tackle, ministry officials told the Jordan Times. Officials said that last year "several" dispatches — each dispatch consisting of three to four bags — originating abroad, in particular from the U.S., and destined for Jordan had been reported missing. However, the officials strongly denied that employees pilfered for treasure in international mail.

As for opened letters and packages, officials pointed out that customs and security have the right to open and inspect mail entering and leaving the Kingdom to ensure that no illegal materials are being posted.

Mr. Qudah wrote that the ministry was well aware of missing mail, particularly from the U.S., and that the ministry had been in contact with the United States Postal System (USPS) since March over the issue. Most international mail that goes missing never arrives in Jordan, he asserted. Therefore, he said, it is incumbent on the country in which the mail originates to follow up the matter, which USPS officials have promised to do.

Other officials added that the ministry has increased its staff at Queen Alia Airport to handle the volume of international mail, avoid delay in delivery and ensure better security for incoming mail. The ministry will have at least two round-the-clock employees to improve services, officials said.

Through continuous communication with the USPS and Royal Jordanian, officials said that the problem has been corrected, for the most part, since late

March.

Another official pointed out that some mail arriving from abroad is often not appropriately addressed, or, as in the case of publications, the sleeve with the address is missing. An entire room at the postal ministry is dedicated to such mail.

Mr. Qudah said that one of another common cause of mail not being delivered is faulty address, or, no address. The ministry has a department that tries to locate the correct address of the addressee, and it does send letters on for delivery if the address is found.

If no address is found, the ministry returns the parcel to the sender if the letter is from outside the Kingdom; providing a return address is written on the parcel. If the mail is from inside Jordan, the ministry holds the parcel for six months. If it is a registered parcel, the ministry retains it for one year. After these time periods, the mail is destroyed.

If a parcel includes "important papers" such as personal papers etc., the parcel is kept at the ministry for five years, after which time it is put into the ministry safe.

Passports and other official documents are sent to the appropriate authorities.

"The citizen can help us by writing the accurate and complete address on the envelope," he said.

Publications, he said,

often arrive without an address. If you subscribe to a publication, you can register your name at the ministry to ensure its arrival at the proper address.

The delay in receiving international mail, he said, is due to the lack of sufficient facilities at the central post office, which is the only post office that handles incoming and outgoing international mail. The 17-year-old building cannot accommodate the enormous volume of mail arriving; which in 1994 amounted to 83 million parcels — all of which is sorted by hand. Furthermore, the office now handles all incoming and outgoing Iraqi mail which further strains the ability for timely delivery.

The ministry, he said, has plans and land for a new building with electronic sorting equipment, but unfortunately, no finances to undertake the project that is estimated to cost JD 8 million.

All ministry officials during interviews with the Jordan Times expressed their willingness to hear complaints from the public.

"The citizen is most important to us and his complaints help us do our job properly," Mr. Qudah stressed.

Should you have a complaint, address your grievance to the manager of the post office you frequent, then address any postal official at the ministry.

Weighing the scales

(Continued from page 1)

imbalance of the scales generally works in favour of the customer.

The ministry has plans to install electronic scales at Amman's 48 post offices to ensure accurate weighing. But the cost of each scale, JD 1,000, means that this will only happen gradually. For now, the ministry has installed two electronic scales at both the downtown post office and the 1st Circle, Jabal Amman office. Mr. Qudah said that this year the ministry planned to bring three more scales programmed with postal rates to the downtown post office and the

central post office in Abdali.

The undersecretary did not comment directly in his fax about the resulting postal charges at office outside the Intercontinental Hotel — long a source of complaint of foreigners and locals. Another official responsible for the office said that this particular incident was being investigated and said he would submit a recommendation for punitive action against the employee(s) involved.

The undersecretary said that he is now insisting that all employees provide stamps to be attached by the customer to avoid "miscommunication and mistrust."

Jordan regrets U.N. refusal

(Continued from page 1)

treaty with Israel, which calls for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the region.

Mr. Kabarti has warned against the dangers that Israel's nuclear reactor poses to Jordan in light of its proximity to Jordanian cities, demanding international safety guarantees and international inspection of the reactor.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House of Parliament Saturday expressed concern about Israel's failure to sign the NPT, criticising the major powers for "exempting Israel" from signing the treaty.

President of the Committee Abdullah Ensour said Mr. Kabarti will soon brief the committee on Jordan's position on the issue.

Tunisian Foreign Minister Said Ben Mustafa who arrived in Amman Saturday with Mr. Kabarti on his way home, said he was satisfied with the outcome of the NAM meeting on the NPT.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Mr. Mustafa as

saying that the most important decision of the meeting was "the agreement on the general principles governing the issue of nuclear non-proliferation."

Palestinian Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi, who also arrived here on board the same flight as Mr. Kabarti, said Arab states had insisted that no country be exempted from joining the NPT.

Mr. Kaddoumi said Israel's refusal to sign the NPT "means that Israel has nuclear arms and threatens the Arab region with them."

Meanwhile, an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, established by Oriental Jews, said in a fax to the Jordan Times that over 15 Israeli non-governmental organisations have signed a document demanding that the Jewish state enter the NPT, which will be up for renewal in the U.N. next month.

Second suspect held

(Continued from page 1)

lived intermittently since 1993, was the site of an unexplained explosion earlier this year outside the home of an apparent McVeigh acquaintance.

Agents examining motel rooms and questioning

friends in an effort to trace McVeigh's movements — and find where he got his money.

It was learned Friday that McVeigh stayed at the Imperial Motel in Kingman for almost two weeks before turning up in Kansas

Higher oil prices may remove '95 budget deficits of Arab Gulf states

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states could have deficit-free budgets this year for the first time in nearly a decade if oil prices remained strong and they maintained projected spending, economists have said.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's crude, projected an average oil price of between \$12 and \$16 in 1995 and again trimmed spending to tackle the deficit.

"Oil prices have surged by nearly 20 per cent since the beginning of the year and this means an increase of nearly 10 per cent in GCC oil earnings," said Henry Azzam, chief economist of the Saudi National Commercial Bank. "If prices maintained the same level through the year and member states did not largely exceed projected spending, then the budget deficit could be sharply lower or even disappear," he told AFP by telephone from Jeddah.

Oil prices reached their highest level in a year this week, exceeding \$18. The price of Brent crude of the North Sea climbed to \$18.74 for June delivery while the

price of OPEC's basket of seven crudes stood at \$18.69 on Tuesday compared with \$18.69 on Monday.

Until April 20, oil prices averaged around \$17, much higher than their 1994 average of around \$15.90 and 1993's of \$16.33.

Economists said the situation could be much better if the U.S. dollar was strong as most GCC currencies are effectively pegged to the greenback.

They noted the increase in earnings was partially offset by the decline in the dollar against major currencies since it means a higher import bill.

Oil provides more than 80 per cent of the income of GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A sharp decline in oil prices has forced most of them to slash expenditure and withdraw from their overseas reserves to bridge the budget gap.

Spending cuts in 1995 more than halved the combined GCC deficit to around \$9.63 billion from \$17.3 billion in 1994.

The deficit hit a record \$61.2 billion in 1991 due to

huge financial contributions to a coalition drive to eject Iraqi invasion forces from Kuwait.

The biggest deficit cut occurred in Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter. It slashed the shortfall by around 62 per cent to nearly \$4 billion from \$10.6 billion after cutting expenditure to around \$40 billion from \$42.6 billion.

"The improvement in oil prices is a pleasant surprise for the GCC countries," Mr. Azzam said. "It is a positive development that will affect their income unless they are tempted by the higher prices to boost spending."

Experts said oil prices had improved because most members of the 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) were respecting their output quotas and there have been growing speculation embargo-hit Iraq would not resume oil exports shortly.

Economists said Iraq's refusal to accept a United Nations resolution authorising limited oil sales was good news for GCC producers as this bolstered prices and enabled them to keep production levels.

"Although OPEC is producing above its ceiling, the increase has remained limited and could be easily absorbed by the market given the high demand in the first quarter," said Yusuf Khalifa, economics professor at the UAE university.

"But the most important factor for the strong prices is that Saudi Arabia and other key Gulf producers are strictly observing their quotas. There is no doubt the continuation of such a situation will greatly help their attempts to restore balance to their budgets and economies."

A breakdown by the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank (EIB) showed all GCC countries suffered from budget shortfalls in 1995. The deficit stood at \$3.3 billion in Kuwait, \$320 million in Bahrain, \$290 million in the UAE, \$800 million in Oman and \$900 million in Qatar.

"The decline in GCC spending by 3.7 per cent this year will have limited negative effects on the economy," EIB said in a study. "The economies of member states are expected to generally stabilise and some of them will achieve growth rates similar to those in 1994."

Dollar's fall takes its toll on Iranian economy

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's reliance on the weak dollar for its oil revenues and its growing debts in strong currencies have created a serious balance of payments problem here, analysts said Friday.

Iran has seen its oil income shrink in value because of the dollar's continuing fall, while its debt, mainly payable in strengthening currencies such as yen, marks and Swiss francs, has grown, they said.

The greenback's spectacular drop of 20 per cent since autumn has offset an increase in oil prices over the same period, an increase which Iran had been banking on to ease its debt.

As Iran gets 80 per cent of its hard currency from dollar-tagged oil sales, it has suffered a five per cent decrease in its purchasing power in a few weeks, said Mohsen Yabavi, a member of the Iranian parliamentary oil committee.

The dollar's fall affects all the oil producing countries but Iran is particularly vulnerable as Germany and Japan are its main creditors.

A third of Iran's \$35 billion short and middle term debt is priced in marks, yens and other strong currencies, experts said.

Tehran is protected by a fixed exchange rate provision in its contracts with Japan, but the same does not apply to its debts to Germany.

The seven to eight billion marks owed to the Germans will now cost Iran an extra \$600 million if the greenback sticks to its current level, a European expert estimated.

Western analysts fear that Iran's drive to honour its debt would be compromised if the dollar does not regain at least some of its former value.

In an attempt to meet its debt commitments, Tehran

has slashed its imports by two thirds in two years and has stopped supporting its currency, causing a sharp rise in inflation and a severe social crisis.

"Another one or two billion dollars to pay could be heavy to bear as there are already serious doubts about Iran's ability to pay back the debt without further rescheduling," a European analyst said.

Iran's debt servicing over the next five years is expected to cost between \$6 and \$7 billion annually, according to Western experts who estimate that Tehran will find it difficult to reduce its imports below this year's \$11 billion.

Experts believe the country's combined oil and non-oil exports will generate, at best, \$18 billion annually, of which nearly \$2 billion have been earmarked in advance for oil investments.

"In this strained financial context, a sustained drop in the dollar could have far more devastating effects on Iran's economy than the oil embargo that the United States has been considering," one expert said.

The difficult situation "shows our vulnerability and our extreme dependence on the dollar," said the Iran News, a daily newspaper close to the government.

Several parliamentary deputies have called on the 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to set oil prices within a currency basket to reduce the impact of the dollar's fluctuation.

"OPEC will have to take a decision at its next ministerial meeting on June 18, in Vienna," said Iran News, which added that an emergency meeting should be held earlier if the situation continues to deteriorate.

Japan mulls way to cope with dollar mountain

TOKYO (R) — Japan, border of the world's largest official foreign exchange reserves, would like to trim the amount of dollars it holds in the long-term but cannot make drastic changes now, senior finance ministry officials said.

"It is desirable to allocate foreign reserves in a number of currencies in the long run, but we can't take any action in the near term," a senior ministry official told Reuters this week. More than 90 per cent of Japan's foreign reserves, which hit a record \$141.52 billion at the end of March, are believed to be held in U.S. dollars. Currency details are not disclosed.

Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura hinted at reducing dollar assets earlier this month, telling reporters: "Such portfolio reshuffling can be considered as a part of long-term reserve management strategy."

In the longer term, it is worth giving serious thought to cutting back on dollar assets and instead parking some funds in other currencies, a government source said.

The dollar's depreciation of more than 20 per cent against the yen this year has prompted calls from Japan's ruling coalition to boost mark assets while unloading dollars.

But the finance ministry, which is in charge of the country's reserves management, is cautious.

"There hasn't been any policy change in the management of external reserves," another senior ministry of finance official told Reuters. His remarks were in response to a media report which said the ministry would soon have to stop buying U.S. treasuries using external reserves.

"If we sell dollars for marks in the current volatile market, it would strengthen the mark even further," the first finance ministry official said.

Also, he added, such an action would not conform with coordination among major nations in the currency market.

The Group of Seven nations Tuesday agreed that an orderly reversal of recent currency movements was desirable.

The dollar hit a record low of 79.75 yen on April 19. "We can't take any action until the market shows signs of long-lasting stability," the first ministry of finance official said.

One way to gradually reshuffle the reserves, the official said, would be for Japan to ask international lending institutions to repay loans which Japan had previously made, in currencies other than dollars. Such loans, however, cover only a small portion of the foreign reserves, he noted.

A third ministry of finance official said that increasing gold reserves was no solution either, and would contravene a 1978 understanding among International Monetary Fund (IMF) members.

That agreement committed IMF members to not increase their gold holdings from levels existing at that time and instead treat the IMF's credit units, called Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), as a major reserve asset.

'The U.N. is bankrupt'

CANBERRA (R) — United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali said Friday the United Nations was bankrupt and the persistent failure of U.N. members to pay levies was one of his greatest frustrations.

"I am bankrupt — the U.N. is bankrupt. This is one of my greatest frustrations," Dr. Ghali told a National Press Club luncheon in Canberra.

"I knock on the door of all the member states — please we need your contribution — I am not very successful," he said.

The U.N.'s 185-member states were supposed to pay their levies in January, but only 25 to 30 paid on time and some half not paid at all, Dr. Ghali said.

"I have done everything to convince the member states that it's very difficult to operate with this chronic financial crisis," he said. "I have no way to put pressure on the member states — they are my clients and have to respect their rights."

A Sydney-based U.N. spokesman said the organisation had "no money in the bank," but added it could not be technically bankrupt as it was not a legal entity which could borrow money or have reserves.

On Thursday, the United Nations proposed a 4.2 per cent cut in overall spending for the first time since 1974.

Fed efforts towards soft landing for U.S. economy seem to bear fruit

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A slowdown in U.S. economic growth in the first quarter of this year suggests that the Federal Reserve's (Fed) seven interest rate hikes in the past 15 months are succeeding in achieving the desired soft landing, analysts here say.

The U.S. economy grew by a moderate 2.8 per cent in the first three months of 1995, the weakest growth since the summer of 1993, the Commerce Department said Friday, a marked slowdown from the 5.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1994.

The increase in gross domestic product was lower than analysts' forecasts of a three per cent increase, and was a marked slowdown from 1994, when GDP for the whole year grew 4.1 per cent, the economy's strongest showing in a decade.

Commerce Secretary Ron Brown welcomed the first quarter figures, saying "the economy is moving to a more sustainable long-term growth path."

Delos Smith, an economist with the Conference Board said the figures were "right in the middle of the target" aimed for by the U.S. central bank, adding "I am sure the Fed is celebrating with champagne."

The Fed started raising interest rates early last year in an effort to slow the economy's steep growth and

forestall inflation, aiming at a growth rate of 2.5 to three per cent, which it considered appropriate for sustainable growth with low inflation.

The challenge now facing the Fed is to maintain a steady growth rate while detecting any warning signs that the economy is speeding up again, or sliding back to stagnation and recession, Mr. Smith said.

Other analysts, however, said that a detailed study of the first quarter economic figures painted a less reassuring picture.

John Lonsi, chief economist with New York ratings agency Moody's noted that growth in consumer spending — which accounts for about two-thirds of GDP and has been the driving force behind the U.S. economic recovery — had slowed markedly in January to March.

Consumer spending grew just 1.4 per cent, a quarter of the increase in the previous three months.

Another sign of a rapid slowing was a 0.6 per cent drop in exports, Mr. Lonsi said, while a marked increase in factory stocks suggested that given the slowdown in consumption, production was likely to drop further.

"If we don't have a rebound of consumer spending an exports... there is a risk that the U.S. economy will slow down to less than two per cent," growth, Mr. Lonsi

warned.

On the consumption front, preliminary indications for April are hardly encouraging, he said, pointing to the persistent weakness in retail sales and a 10 per cent fall in auto sales during the first three weeks of this month.

Auto sales fell 10 per cent in the first three months of this year.

But Mr. Lonsi said he expected consumption to pick up in the second quarter, given that disposable income grew much faster than prices in the first quarter — 4.4 per cent against 1.4 per cent.

And the fall of the dollar should help boost exports, which Mr. Lonsi expects to increase by 15 to 20 per cent against in the coming months.

Analysts here generally feel the latest figures make it unlikely that the Fed will raise interest rates again in the near future, for fear of tightening the screw too much and pushing the economy back into recession.

This will not please Washington's major trading partners, notably Japan and Germany, which have been urging higher U.S. rates to try to curb the slide of the dollar, which has lost 20 per cent of its value against the yen in the past four months.

But Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin has argued that there is no sign of inflation risk

Professor says U.N. should bring ROC in from the cold

WASHINGTON — An American jurist said that the United Nations and the rest of the international community should realize that it is unconscionable to deny Taiwan a proper place in the international community.

James Finerman, professor of law at Georgetown University, said at a conference on contemporary Chinese law that Taiwan, with its economic strength and willingness to contribute to the international community, should be given the opportunity to enjoy the international participation that it seeks.

Finerman said that the United Nations can take the first step by allowing Taiwan to participate as an observer or permitting Taiwan to join peripheral specialized organizations.

Finerman noted that Taiwan has made some inroads in recent years into international non-government organizations, but the specialized organizations of the United Nations remain closed.

He said that it is inadmissible for a nation of Taiwan's size and prominence in the international community to be denied access to the United Nations.

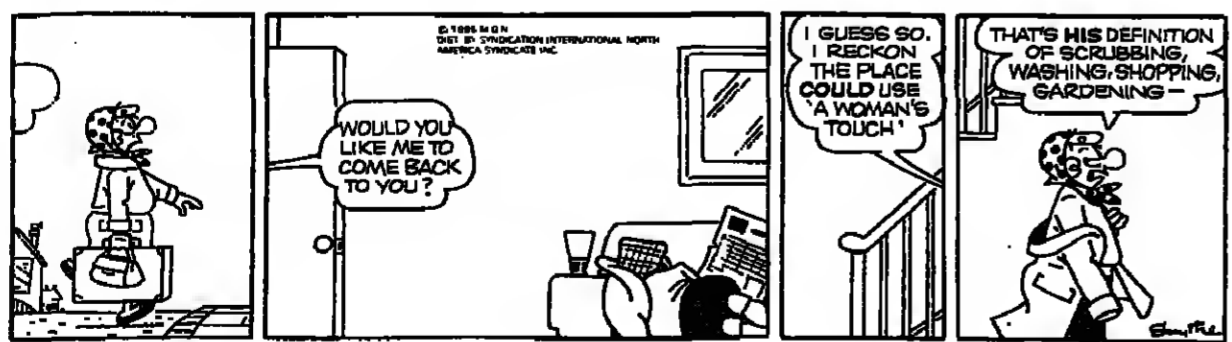
"As the principal international organization in the world," he said, "the United Nations needs to remind itself of its principle of universality."

The conference was the second of its kind sponsored by the Eastern Law Division of the Library of Congress. The first conference on contemporary law was held in 1992.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



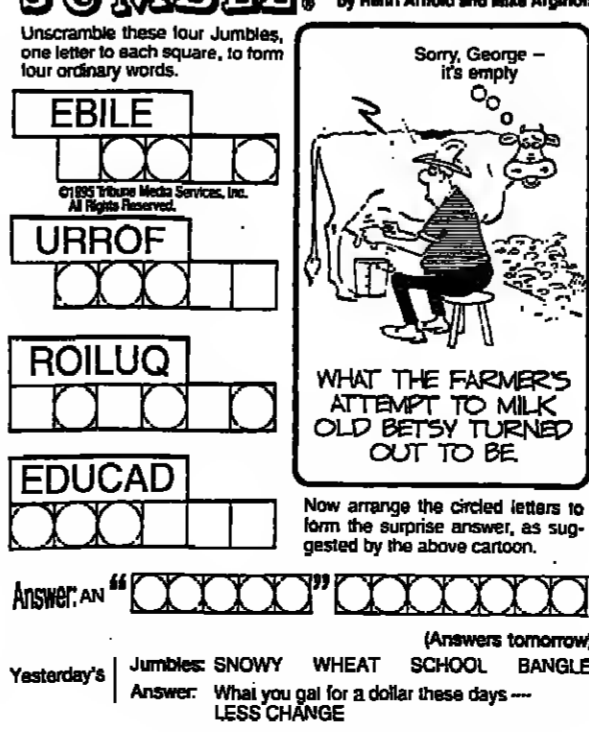
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY APRIL 30, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Steer clear of an argument this morning and then enjoy social activities in the afternoon, but be practical tonight.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Seek the pleasure activities which do not cost too much, and you can have a fine time just the same. GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You find it difficult to get a talent working this morning, so get out and be social, and later do whatever will build up your energy.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) The situation at home may be tense this morning, but later tonight all is smoother. Exercise tact and control today.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Attend some fine philosophical lecture today which will help to life your spirits this morning, and then be with good friends.

VIROGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan how to solve some problem which you may have regardless of where you may be. Use more logic in practical matters.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Your desires are not clear in your mind this morning, but after lunch you know what you want to do.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It would not be wise to work angles this morning, since later a good partner shows how to handle the matter properly.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A friend could confuse you this morning, but later everything clarifies itself, and you can be with good friends tonight.

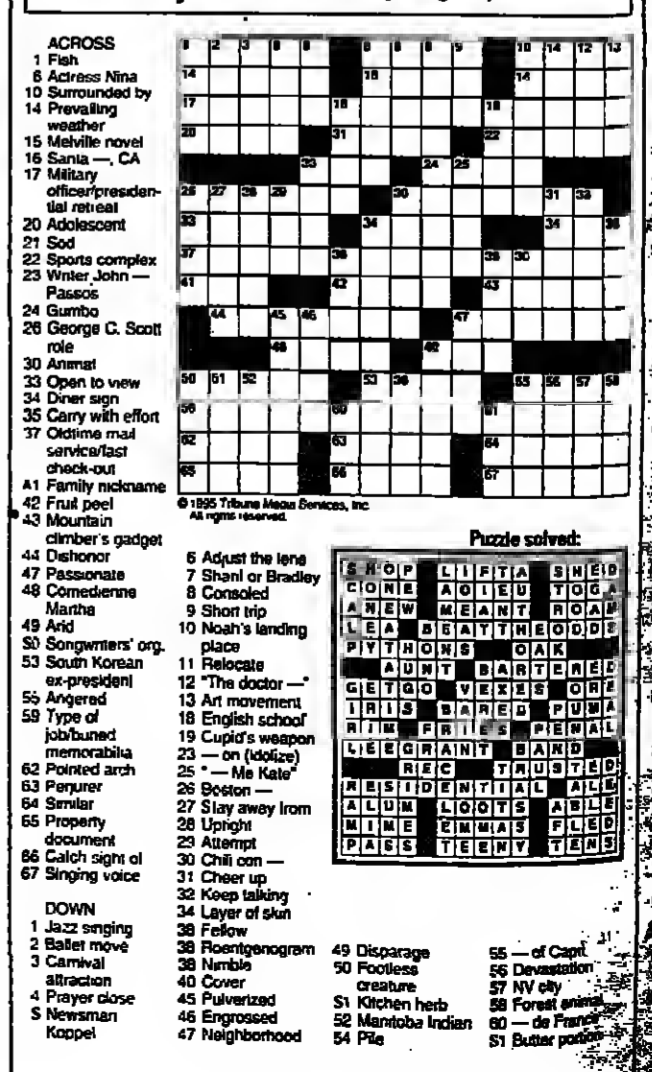
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This morning is not good for going out, but after lunch is an ideal time for such, and tonight you can enjoy friends.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You may be confused this morning, but by early afternoon you see things more clearly and tonight you can gad about town.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't trust your hunches this morning. Intuition improves later today. Tonight you can make a new associate.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

THE Daily Crossword



JSF Shield Faisali, Ramtha clash today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Irbid's Al Hassan Stadium will Sunday witness the elimination of one of the country's top soccer teams, Al Faisali or Al Ramtha, from the first round of the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) Shield competition.

The knockout tournament, grouping the Kingdom's 12 Premier League teams, is the first of the season's four prestigious soccer titles. The other three are the Jordan Cup, the Cup Winners' Cup and the Premier League.

Al Ramtha, who came in second place in three of last season's championships, will seek to upset Al Faisali, last year's Cup Winners' and Jordan Cup titleholders.

Al Faisali got off to a bad start this year after disappointing results in the Arab Clubs championships. They were surprisingly also

thrashed 4-1 by Al Jazireh in the recently-concluded Amman Soccer Championship.

The winner of the Group 3 Ramtha-Faisali clash will meet newcomers Al Jalil in the second round. Al Jalil had eliminated Al Russeifa 1-0.

The participating teams have been divided into three groups. The top team in each group will play the final round to determine the winner of the 15th JSF Shield.

In Group 1, titleholders Al Hussein Irbid overcame Al Ahli 5-4 on penalty kicks after the match ended in a 1-1 draw.

Amman Soccer Championship winners Al Jazireh continued their impressive form overcoming Sahab 1-0.

Al Hnssein and Al Jazireh will now clash for a place in the final round.

In Group 2, 1994 Premier League champs Al Wihdat advanced after overcoming Al Qadissieh 3-0 on penalty kicks after a 1-1 draw.

Newcomers Al Baqaa upset Kufroum 1-0, and will next face Al Wihdat. Al Faisali, Al Wihdat, and Al Ramtha are all after a record fourth JSF Shield title.

Al Wihdat were the winners in 82, 83, 88. Al Faisali in 87, 91, 92, and Al Ramtha 89, 90, 93.

Al Jazireh were the winners in 81 and 86. Amman in 84 and 85, while Al Hussein's 1994 win was their first and only major title.

The second round begins May 4, and the final round May 12.

2ND ROUND MATCHES

Hnssein vs Jazireh
Baqaa vs Wihdat
Jalil vs (Ramtha-Faisali winner)

Fri. 5/5
Thu. 4/5
Fri. 5/5

Salt Stadium
Petra Stadium
Petra Stadium

Bruguera and Ivanisevic join injury list

MONTE CARLO (R) — French Open champion Sergi Bruguera and "big-serving" Goran Ivanisevic on Friday followed Pete Sampras on to the growing injury list among contenders for next month's Paris Grand Slam event.

Bruguera, winner at Roland-Garros for the past two years, hurt a knee in the second set of his quarter-final against Italian Andrea Gaudenzi at the Monte Carlo Open as he crashed to a 7-6, 6-2, defeat.

Croat Ivanisevic, another candidate for the French Open title, made his way into the semifinals after an extraordinary three-sets win over Austrian Gilbert Schaller despite an elbow injury which suddenly turned his fearsome serving arm into a purveyor of double faults.

The fourth seed went to

hospital for x-rays after the match amid fears he might be forced to pull out of the clay court tournament which is proving costly to the top seeds.

On Wednesday world number two Pete Sampras withdrew after sustaining an ankle injury in his opening match. He returned to the United States for two weeks total rest.

The rising casualty list in the run-up to the French Open starting on May 29 can do nothing but shorten the odds on victory for newly enthroned American world number one Andre Agassi, not playing in Monaco, in his quest to become the first player since Rod Laver to have won all four Grand Slam events.

Fifth seed Bruguera, a true clay court specialist

who could be Agassi's most dangerous rival in Paris, was back in action only recently, after an operation on his left knee in February.

"The pain came at 2-2 in the second set. This time it was the other knee," the 1991 Monte Carlo Open champion said after his defeat by 14th seed Gaudenzi. "I'm not worried about Roland Garros, I'm just worried about my knees."

Ivanisevic had plenty to fret about, too, after going to the verge of breakdown in his win over the unseeded Schaller. The Croat lost the first set and struggled to level the match after a tiebreak in the second before serving for the match at 5-2 in the third.

But his elbow seemed to seize up as he double-faulted four times in a row to give Schaller the game.

Jordan plays in charity tourney

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's Under-22 national basketball team Sunday plays for 5th place in the charity tournament currently underway in Malaysia.

Sponsored by the Municipality of Greater Amman, the team is representing the city of Amman in the eight nation tourney which concludes today.

Jordan finished third in Group B which also includes the Philippines, Russia and Thailand.

Group A includes China, Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia. The top two teams in each group qualified in the semifinals in which the Philippines and China are expected to defeat Singapore, and Russia and move to the finals.

Group A and B third place finishers Jordan and Malaysia will play for 5th and 6th places, while winless Thailand and Australia will play for 7th and 8th places.

Jordan had scored their only win 81-62 over Thailand. They lost 80-75 to the Philippines and 52-48 to Russia.

The tournament is the first set for the Kingdom's U-22 team which will represent the country in the Men's Asian Championship in June. The team will also play in the Arab U-22 competition scheduled to be held in Amman in April 96 and the Asian U-22 competition later next year.

The team playing in Malaysia includes only two players above 22: Team captain Jihad Saliba and Marwan Saeedi. The rest of the lineup is made up of a promising young group who have been chosen to be the Kingdom's new national team. These include U-18 stars Zaid Alkhas, Ma'an Odeh, Mahmoud Sha'aban in addition to Ziad Nabulsi, Riyad Ayyesh, Yousef Abu Baker, Naser Alawneh, and Faisal Nour. Mohammad Al Shamali, Ramez Ham-moudh and Ghalib Ennabi missed the competition but are also on the team.

The Jordan Basketball Federation has however been criticised for letting go of many veteran players who were still ready and able to play on the national team. These include Marwan Ma'louq, Yousef Zaghoul and Hilal Barakat.

Magic rout Celtics 124-77

ORLANDO (AP) — Shaquille O'Neal, who guaranteed the Orlando Magic wouldn't be swept in the first round of the playoffs again, kept his word Friday night by leading a 124-77 rout of the Boston Celtics.

The Atlantic Division champions buried memories of last year's three-and-out showing against Indiana, riding O'Neal's inspired play and improved free throw shooting to a 47-point defeat of Boston, worst in the Celtics' storied history.

The victory relieved the Magic of a burden that even the best record in the Eastern Conference couldn't lift during the regular season. Orlando won 57 games but struggled down the stretch, losing seven of its last 11.

No one felt the pressure more than O'Neal, whose poor foul shooting is the team's biggest weakness. He was a different player at the line Friday night, much more deliberate in his approach in making 11 of 14 and scoring 23 points.

Nick Anderson added 20 points for Orlando and, like O'Neal, and the rest of the Magic's starters, sat out the fourth quarter while the bench completed the most lopsided game in Boston's storied history.

The Celtics' previous worst loss was by 44 points to Portland in 1977. Dee Brown led Boston with 20 points, but Dino Radja was held to 10-17 below his season average against Orlando.

Game 2 of the best-of-5 series will be played Sunday at Orlando Arena, where the Magic won 39 of 41 regular-season games.

Orlando scored 16 of the game's first 20 points and led by 22 before settling for a 54-36 halftime lead. It was 88-56 after three quarters.

Bulls 108, Hornets 100 OT: At Charlotte, North Carolina, Michael Jordan hurt back into the playoffs with 48 points, 10 in overtime, and the Bulls took the home-court advantage away from Charlotte.

Jordan hit a bank shot with 2:03 left that gave the Bulls a 100-95 lead and followed that



Michael Jordan slam-dunks the ball over an opponent

Spurs 104, Nuggets 88: At San Antonio, Sean Elliott scored 13 of his 21 points in the third quarter as the Spurs defeated Denver, which last year as a No. 8 seed eliminated top-seeded Seattle in a first-round playoff series.

The Spurs ended the third quarter with a 19-4 run launched when Elliott sunk a 3-pointer and followed with a dunk. His 5-of-6 shooting in the period, including two 3-pointers, boosted the Spurs to a 78-60 lead going into the final period.

David Robinson scored 14 points in 30 minutes — his third lowest total of the season — and rested most of the fourth quarter, along with other San Antonio starters. Robinson also grabbed eight rebounds.

Four other Spurs players scored in double figures: Vinny Del Negro had 18 points, J.R. Reid 14, Chuck Person 10 and Avery Johnson 15 points and eight assists. Bryant Stith led the Nuggets with 16 points.

Phoenix 129, Portland 102: At Phoenix, Charles Barkley had 29 points and 16 rebounds as Phoenix opened the playoffs with a big victory.

The Suns, who swept their Pacific Division rivals this season without being able to out rebound them in any of the five games, turned the trick 45-37 Friday night, with A.C. Green collecting 11. Dan Majerle made 7 of 10 3-point attempts and finished with 25 points for the Suns.

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Jeff Bridges & Tommy Lee Jones in Blown Away		Kim Basinger, Julia Roberts, Sophia Loren PRET - A - PORTER		CONCORD '1' Baby's Day Out Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:30, 10:30		Musa Hijazin "Sum's" in the political satire Hi Citizen written and directed by Mohammad Al Shawaqia daily on 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes on Monday — Haifa Al Agha in the children's play ★ Sa'di's Return ★	Presents Ghassan Al Mashini with the No. one artist Abir Issa in CABARET as of Wednesday May 10, 1995	Presents: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155. The theatre is closed Saturdays & Sundays.

Jordan Open Abu Hamda sails through quarters

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's current top ranked and 1993 Imad Abu Hamda sailed through the quarterfinals of the Jordan Open Tennis Championship Saturday 6-1, 6-0 win over Khaled Nafa.

Hamda will next play Marwan Hanania in the quarterfinals today. Hanania advanced after a 6-4, 6-2 win over Nafa.

Reaching the semifinals was Ihab Shehadeh with a 7-5, 6-4 over Ramzi Halabi, while Ahmad Al Hadid beat Omar Bataneh 7-6, 6-2.

All players had registered for the championship, the third round leading to the Kingdom's Open tennis.

Hamda had no trouble overcoming his opponent in 45 minutes.

However Nafa, who is only just 15, showed signs that he is a promising young player.

1994 junior's champion admitted that he lacked experience and said that was the main hindrance to development.

He may have the chance to play better, more experienced players like Imad. That is the main thing players lack here," Nafa said in a post-match statement to the Jordan Times.

The Kingdom's tennis scene now has a good number of young tennis players. However, they lack the chance to play their veteran counterparts who opt to quit the game early or are currently abroad pursuing their studies.

These include Laith Azzouni, who has chosen to concentrate on his tawjihi exams this year. His brother Faris, who played in the Davis Cup two weeks ago, has also surprisingly opted not to participate.

Top-ranked Abu Hamda, who is of course favoured to win the event, praised his young opponent.

"Khaled has the potential to play much better. If these young players have the opportunity to play the older ones on a regular basis, I'm sure they will improve much faster."

Today's matches

Ihab Shehadeh vs Ahmad Al Hadid 4 p.m.
Imad Abu Hamda vs Marwan Hanania 5 p.m.

All matches are at Al Hussein Youth City tennis courts including those deciding 5-8 places.

By Roufan Nabhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan remained in 6th place after rounds 17, 18, 19, 20 in the 8th Asia, Africa and Middle East Bridge (BFAAME) Championship which started here on April 22.

India remained in the lead with 381.50 points, followed by Egypt who moved up to second with 364.50 points while South Africa dropped to third place with 330.00 points.

In round 17 Jordan played Pakistan 15-15. Russia, who is a bona fide member of the European Bridge League and is playing here by special invitation of the BFAAME, lost 13-17 to Jordan in round 18. The Kingdom's team then beat Saudi Arabia 18-12 in round 19, and finally in round 20 Jordan defeated Sri Lanka 18-12.

Standings in the eight-nation women's competition after rounds 13, 14 and 15 came as follows: India is still in first place with 269.25 points followed by Egypt with 254.00 in second place and South Africa is third with 246.50.

Jordan's women team is still in 7th place with 165.00.

Women's teams results of round 15:

Results of the open teams round 20:

Home Team	Away Team	VP Score
8 Russia	1. Mauritius	12-18

India leads bridge championship

13 Sri Lanka	3. Jordan	12-18	2. Egypt	3. Kenya	25-5
11 Bangladesh	5. S. Arabia	13-17	5. Réunion	8 India	8-22
9. Reunion	7. Egypt	15-15			
12 Kenya	4. Syria	5-25			
10 S. Africa	6. Pakistan	15-15			
2. India	Bye	18			

Representing Jordan in the men's team are Ghassan Ghanem, Marwan Ghanem, Arafat Al Saheb, Samir Zein, Omran Abu Dheim and Suleiman Abdo.

Representing the women's team are Sireen Barakat, Reem Andoni, Mais Aloul, Alia Shraideh, Antoinette Akasheh and Taghreed Akasheh.

The championship, held at the Forte Grand Hotel under the patronage of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, will conclude May 3.

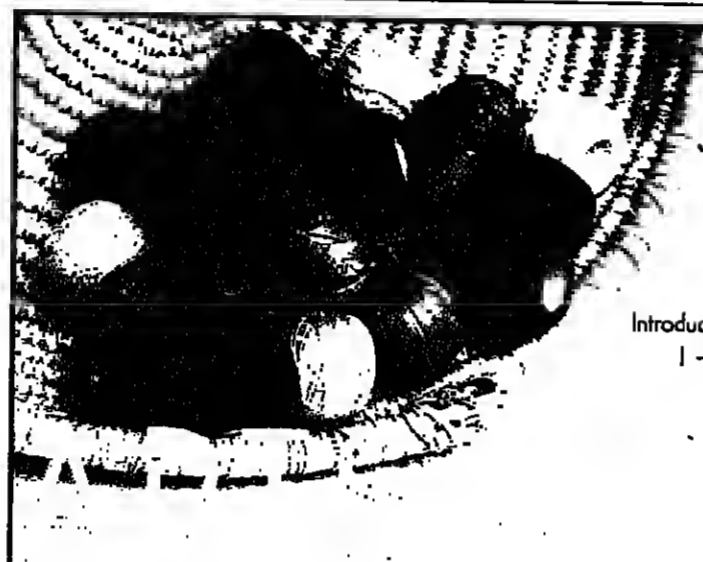
The top two teams of the competition will participate in the World Bridge Championship due to be held in Beijing in September.

The open and women's semifinals will be held on Mon. May 1. Open and women's finals will be held May 2, 1995. And the competition will conclude Wednesday May 3.

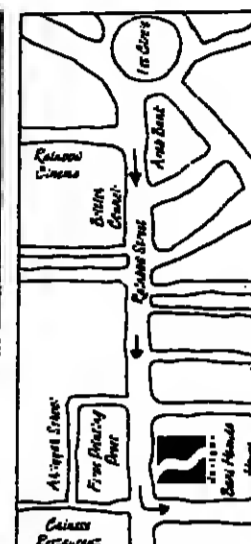
3rd. Here are the standings following the end of round 20:

RANKINGS

Open Teams	Women's Teams
1. India 381.50	1. India 291.25
2. Egypt 364.50	2. Egypt 279.00
3. S. Africa 330.00	3. S. Africa 269.50
4. Réunion 301.00	4. Pakistan 227.25
5. Sri Lanka 299.50	5. Sri Lanka 200.50
6. Jordan 267.25	6. Réunion 191.50
7. Mauritius 252.00	7. Jordan 183.50
8. Pakistan 238.25	8. Kenya 131.50
9. Syria 237.50	
10 Bangladesh 234.00	
11. S. Arabia 218.00	
12. Kenya 215.00	



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Blackburn in sight of title

LONDON (AP) — Blackburn could be crowned English soccer champion Monday for the first time in 81 years.

The team assembled at huge cost by owner Jack Walker and manager Kenny Dalglish bids to move 11 points clear of defending title Manchester United Sunday.

If it does, and the Reds fail to beat Coventry Monday, the tide goes to Blackburn for the first time since 1914.

Rovers finished runner up to United last season, only two years after gaining promotion to the Premier League.

But they have not won a major title since the FA Cup in 1928.

Walker took over the unfashionable club from north-western England four years ago and persuaded former Liverpool star Dalglish to end his retirement and take over running the team.

As a town, Blackburn hasn't progressed much since its days as the center of the textile industry in the last century. But Walker and Dalglish have weaved together a team that could dominate even mighty Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool in the next few years and put its name on the map in European soccer.

Dalglish has teamed up England's top striker Alan Shearer with Chris Sutton, a 3 million-pound (\$8 million) purchase from Norwich, and the two have scored an combined 56 goals this season in Rovers' title drive.

Other noted international players on the team are goalkeeper Tim Flowers (England), defenders Colin Hendry (Scotland), Henning Berg (Norway), Paul Warhurst (England), Jeff Kenna (Ireland) and Graeme Le Saux (England), midfielders David Baty (England), Tim Sherwood (Wales) and Stuart Ripley (England) and

forward Kevin Gallacher (Scotland).

Rovers should have the firepower to gain three points at Upton Park and put the title out of United's reach.

Jordan Times
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SAVE THE DAY

common. Like the physician, declarer's task is to diagnose the problem, isolate the threat, then complete the cure. Here's an example of what we mean.

North's double of four diamonds, by the nature of West's preempt, cannot be based on a trump stack. Rather, it is made on enough general values to respect to defeat the contract, but partner is free to pull the double with an unsuitable hand.

South's hand was certainly better suited to offense and there were 100 honors to soften any mortal blow.

West led the ace of diamonds and continued with the queen. Declarer "covered an honor with an honor," East ruffed and shifted to a spade. Declarer finessed. West won and returned a diamond. Declarer ruffed, drew trumps and tried the club finesse—down one.

It was unlucky to have both black-suit finesses fail. However, declarer had only to study the auction to diagnose the disease and the antidote would have been obvious.

East was marked with a singleton diamond on the bidding. Therefore, that defender was the danger hand—declarer cannot afford an early spade lead through the major tenace.

The remedy was simple—declarer should refuse to cover the queen of diamonds at trick two.

If East ruffs, the king of diamonds is established for a spade discard. If East refuses to ruff, declarer simply wins the oxt trick, draws trumps and takes the club finesse. Although this loses, a long club is set up to take care of the spade queen. Declarer's only remaining precaution is to rise with the ace when East shifts to a spade.

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Turkey says most goals achieved in north Iraq

ANKARA (Agencies) — The Turkish government has achieved 80 per cent of its goals in the military campaign against rebel Kurds in northern Iraq, Defence Minister Mehmet Golhan said on Saturday.

"Two thirds of the troops have been pulled out after more than 80 per cent of the targets have been reached," he told the Anatolian news agency in the southern city of Adana.

Responding to Western criticism of the incursion launched with 35,000 men on March 20, Mr. Golhan said: "We did not go into that territory to stay. Troops will withdraw when all targets are reached." He gave no date.

Ankara says it troops went into northern Iraq to smash camps of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in the area and to cut off support for guerrillas inside Turkey.

It says the PKK, taking advantage of a four-month feud that split Iraqi Kurds in the region among themselves, was preparing to declare the area a "liberated zone" under its control when Turkey moved in.

Mr. Golhan said troops remained in the rugged Mezki-Kerya Deri region.

"Fighting can break out anytime, when troops have

gone through that area, we will pull out," he said.

The region is north of the Iraqi Kurdish towns of Derkar and Batufa and a main guerrilla base.

"The area is so steep it is accessible only by foot. Heavy weaponry is useless there," a security source said.

Turkey has brought home 23,000 of the troops but its Western allies insist on a total withdrawal from the region.

The six-week-old incursion into northern Iraq has cost about \$47 million so far, Mr. Golhan said on Friday.

Mr. Golhan was quoted by Anatolia as saying the cost of the drive, in which 35,000 troops took part at the height, was less than had been expected. It was the first time a Turkish official had clearly priced the operation.

The parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe said this week it would suspend founding-member Turkey if it did not leave northern Iraq by end of June.

A senior Turkish diplomat who returned on Friday from talks in the region with Iraqi Kurd leader Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said Mr. Talabani had pledged to stop a PKK formation in PUK-controlled areas of northern

Iraq.

The diplomat, Cenk Duatpe, said reports that several hundred men from PUK's rival Kurdistan Democratic Party had replaced departing Turkish troops in some areas, were encouraging.

Ankara wants the Kurds of northern Iraq, who are at odds with the Baghdad government, to block PKK movement on their side of the border.

More than 15,000 people have been killed in Turkey since 1984 when the PKK took up arms for a separate state in the southeast.

Prime Minister Tansu Ciller said on Saturday police had seized the alleged culprits of more than 10 bombing attacks in Istanbul and linked them to the PKK.

In a statement issued by her office, Ms. Ciller praised Istanbul police for uncovering those behind the bombings, in which at least four people have died since November.

The statement described the suspects as "PKK-linked" but did not identify them nor say how many they were.

The latest bombing attributed to the suspects was the explosion of a car bomb on April 21 in Istanbul in which one person died.



MEMORY OF WAR: Photo taken on May 8, 1945 shows British Field Marshal 'Monty' Montgomery (third seated from right) receiving the unconditional surrender of Ger-

many from German state officers at Leineburg Heath, Germany. The surrender of Germany came after the Soviet seizure of Berlin on May 2, 1945 (AFP photo)

Organised crime, extremism and extradition key themes at Cairo meeting

CAIRO (Agencies) — A U.N. conference opened on Saturday on cooperation against organised crime as a dispute loomed in the background over the perennial problem of extradition and political asylum.

Dignitaries called at the formal opening session for a concerted campaign against the big crime syndicates widely seen as a growing threat to international law and order.

"New and rapacious forms of criminality have been taking advantage of the very trends that have brought so many benefits: improvements in information and transportation technologies, relaxation of border controls and the internationalisation of world markets," U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said in a message read out.

"Rising crime is impairing development and the general well-being of humanity... it requires coordinated international action, with close cooperation among states," he added.

Officials of the agency in charge, the U.N. Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch in Vienna, say they

want the 10-day conference to find ways to put into practice commitments member states have made at previous meetings.

These would include exchanging information, simplifying and standardising extradition procedures and updating legislation to keep up with new forms of crime, such as computer crime and crime against the environment.

But host country Egypt, with some backing from Tunisia and Turkey, has tried to put the spotlight exclusively on "terrorism" — acts of violence by their political opponents.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak told the opening session that terrorism and organised international crime were two sides of the same coin.

"I would like to invite you from this podium to intensify your efforts to avert this danger, which threatens individuals and groups, wrecking peace and security, preventing prosperity and progress and turning society into a jungle," he said.

The way to prevent terrorism was extradition agreements and rules for international judicial coordination.

Egypt and the other two Middle East states with oppositions in exile submitted separate but similar resolutions saying there are links between organised international crime and groups which carry out acts of political violence.

In pre-conference consultations on Friday, the resolutions ran into opposition on the technical grounds that they reached the secretariat too late and only the Egyptian one was accepted for submission to the full conference.

But the Turks and Tunisians may merge their resolutions with that of Egypt, if they can all agree on a text. Diplomats said mainly Western countries opposed the resolutions as blatant attempts to win international support against the three governments' political opponents.

Turkey's resolution of "terrorism" apparently aimed at Kurdish rebels in exile, said: "There is a growing connection between terrorist groups and illicit trafficking in arms and in drugs and the proceeds from such trafficking are utilised to finance terrorist activities."

Egypt has been pressing for years for countries to extradite exiles it says are linked to the Gamaa Al Islamiya, the largest militant organisation fighting to overthrow the government.

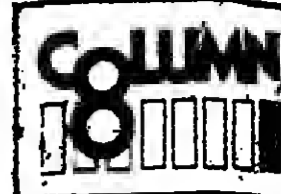
Tunisia would like West European governments to stop granting political asylum to leaders of the Al Nahdha movement, the Islamist party banned in Tunisia. It says they are wanted in connection with acts of violence.

More than 1,500 officials and experts gathered in Cairo for conference which lasts until May 8.

Delegates from 128 nations had already arrived Saturday, but 140 nations are expected. Most countries sent their interior or justice ministers, although the United States and France among others sent more junior officials.

More than 60 non-governmental organisations and 360 independent experts are also attending.

The fight against organised crime, terrorism, corruption and crimes to the environment are to top the agenda. Delegations are also to discuss how to harmonise extradition procedures, and improve police, courts and the prison systems.



Mandela sells the shirt off his back

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — President Nelson Mandela sold the shirt off his back and the shoes off his feet in a bid to help his ruling African National Congress (ANC) in Western Cape province out of financial trouble, South African public radio reported Saturday. At an auction late Friday, two of the colourful shirts the president favours were sold for 4,000 rand (\$1,000) and 8,000 rand (\$2,000), while a pair of running shoes which he wore while serving 27 years in jail as a political prisoner went for 10,000 rand (\$2,700). Other items ranged from Mr. Mandela's reading glasses to crystal glassware and autographed copies of his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*. Altogether the auction raised 150,000 rand (\$41,600), which will help the ANC in the province to pay off a 300,000 rand (\$83,000) debt, including a 267,000 rand (\$74,000) telephone bill, accumulated during all-race elections last April.

Anarchists held after call to 'kill' Pope

TRENTO, Italy (AFP) — Two anarchists were detained in this northern town Friday after posting posters with calls to "kill the Pope," police said. The wording of the appeal was tongue-in-cheek as it gave potential killers a choice between snakes, poison and a blow with the fist, according to the police. "The Pope of Rome Karol Wojtyla, (a) tyrant" was guilty of the "worst crimes against women, men, animals and nature," said the poster which was signed "The Anarchists." Pope John Paul II is to visit Trento Saturday and Sunday, marking the 450th anniversary of the Council of Trento. Officials said the two anarchists were known to police. Leaflets denouncing the visit and criticising the Pope for having given his blessing to wars and dictatorships have been found in Trento in recent days.

Norwegian nurse held over deaths of 10 pensioners

OSLO (R) — A nurse was arrested on suspicion of killing 10 patients at an old-age home near Bergen on the Norwegian west coast, police said. Bergen Police Superintendent Svein Erik Krogvald said the suspect, an unidentified 38-year-old woman, would be questioned during the weekend. "I can confirm one arrest has been made and it is the person who has been at the centre of the investigation," he told Norwegian radio. "The suspicions involve 10 deaths." The investigation was launched after 42 pensioners at the 58-bed home died in 1993, twice as many as the year before. Police soon focused on the auxiliary nurse, who had been on duty at the time of many of the deaths. Questioned but not arrested, she was suspended last June. She has since been on sick leave although the suspension was later lifted. In the only previous case of its kind in Norway a male nurse was given a 21-year prison term in 1983 for murdering 22 pensioners at an old-age home near Trondheim.

Americans paid thousands for fake nobility

LONDON (AFP) — Two British commoners were convicted of duping rich Americans into paying tens of thousands of dollars for worthless aristocratic titles granting non-existent privileges. One Florida couple thinking they were buying negotiable British titles as an investment for their mentally handicapped child were fleeced of \$63,000, the court heard. Other victims answering advertisements in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist* and other publications offering "magnificent British titles... over 1,000 years old" reportedly included a clergyman and lawyer, Stefanos Kollakis and Martin Lewis, convicted of fraud, had sold titles such as "Lord of Boddard" and "Lord of Breckenthwaite."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Queen attends LAU charity dinner

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday attended the charity dinner honouring pioneering Jordanian women graduates from the Lebanese American University (LAU) at the Inter-Continental Hotel, a Royal Court statement said. The Queen distributed gifts to the eleven graduates praising their initiative in pursuing their higher education during the early 1930s and 1940s. The LAU, previously known as the Beirut University College, was established in 1960. Its Alumni Club organises fund raising events for scholarships for needy students at Jordanian universities and has also founded a successful handicrafts development centre known as Al-Aydi Foundation. Queen Noor was received by William Habib, the Lebanese ambassador, Dr. Haydar, the deputy president of the LAU and Mrs. Leila Halasa, acting president of LAU Alumni Club. She was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Ghida Talal, a Royal Court spokesperson said.

Fresh protests at Bahrain University

NICOSIA (AFP) — Students staged fresh protests at Bahrain University on Saturday a week after courses resumed following an extended break because of unrest in the country, university members said. Police fired teargas at students who chanted "victory to Islam and death to the tyrants," a professor and students told AFP by telephone. There was no official confirmation of the demonstrations in the university sites in Sakhr and Issa town, south of the capital Manama. Lectures resumed at Bahrain University on April 22 after a three-week break. Sporadic clashes have erupted in Bahrain since a leading Shiite Muslim cleric was arrested on Dec. 5 and eventually expelled after calling for the restoration of parliament.

UAE gives PNA \$10 million

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has given \$10 million to the World Bank's aid fund for Palestinian self-rule as a contribution for the 1995/96 financial year. The donation brings to \$15 million the UAE's total contribution to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) since it was established in the Gaza Strip and Jericho a year ago, the emirate's news agency WAM reported. An unidentified official quoted by WAM, said his country pledged at a donors' meeting held in Washington in September 1993 to grant the PNA \$25 million over five years. In Paris on Thursday, donor countries agreed to finance the self-rule authority's 1995 budget deficit of \$136 million.

Iraqi volunteers get heavy weapons

BAGHDAD (AFP) — President Saddam Hussein has equipped a new volunteer corps set up last year with assault tanks and anti-aircraft guns, a youth television station controlled by one of President Saddam's sons said Saturday. The 60,000-strong corps, called the "Fedayin of Saddam," also took part in a military parade with the Iraqi army for the first time on Friday to mark the president's 58th birthday, the television said. The unit has been given tanks, guns and armoured troop carriers, the television said. Paratroopers and frogmen serving with the volunteers were also shown on television. The corps was set up last October as the United States and allied countries rushed troops and equipment to the Gulf in response to an Iraqi troop build-up near the border with Kuwait. Around 20 young Iraqis who enlisted as volunteers in the corps were on state television in October ripping apart and eating raw a wolf during a training session.

Sudan's diplomats in Uganda return home

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's ambassador to Uganda and his staff, ordered out by Kampala a week ago, have returned home, the official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) reported on Saturday. It said Ambassador Inayat Abdul Hamid and diplomats of the Kampala mission arrived in Khartoum on Friday night. Uganda broke diplomatic relations with Sudan on Sunday, accusing its embassy in Kampala of spying for Ugandan rebels and providing them with logistical and other support. Police searched the residence of Sudan's Military Attaché Haydar Al Hadi Omer on Monday, saying they were looking for landmines, military uniforms and other equipment purportedly destined for the rebels. They found nothing.

Berbers reluctant to end school strike

TUNIS (R) — Berber children trickled back to Algerian schools on Saturday despite an agreement to end an eight-month strike over recognition of their language, local journalists said. The official APS news agency said children "flocked to classes." But a journalist who toured several schools in Tizi-Ouzou, the main city in the mountainous Kabylie regions, said he saw only a few at school. Most had stayed at home, he told Reuters in Tunis by telephone. About one million schoolchildren and students walked out of classes in Algeria's main Berber regions last September.

Blair wins vote to change party rules

LONDON (R) — British opposition leader Tony Blair took a big step towards power on Saturday when a special conference of his Labour Party voted by a two to one margin for a new rulebook designed to appeal to middle-of-the-road voters.

The conference heeded a warning by Mr. Blair that Labour needed to scrap its 75-year-old constitution, with its commitment to "mass nationalisation, if it wanted to a string of four general election defeats since 1979. "I did not come into the Labour Party to join a pressure group. I didn't become leader of this party to lead a protest movement," he said in a keynote speech to the conference.

"Power without principle is barren. But principle without power is futile. This is a party of government and I will lead it as a party of government," Mr. Blair said.

Britain's two biggest unions, representing transport and public-sector workers, voted against Mr. Blair. But the overall union vote, accounting for 70 per cent of the conference total, broke down 38-32 per cent in his favour.

Among rank-and-file members, who cast the remaining 30 per cent of the vote, the margin of support was an overwhelming 27-3 per cent.

The outcome was a resounding victory for Mr. Blair, who shocked party traditionalists last October when he said he wanted to grasp the nettle of reforming clause four of Labour's rulebook. Although the clause's commitment to wide-scale nationalisation meant little in practice, it was an important symbol for many left-wingers of the party's roots and beliefs.

But Mr. Blair insisted voters would not trust Labour with power unless it was prepared to abandon out-of-date ideology and campaigned long and hard to put his point across.

In an emotional speech of thanks, Mr. Blair said the conference would go down as a day of destiny for Labour and for Britain.

Alluding to the widespread view that he was rash to seek change so soon after becoming leader last July, Mr. Blair said: "If sometimes I seem a little over-hasty and over-urgent, it's for one reason and one reason only: I can't stand these people, these Tories, being in government over our country."

"The people of Britain don't deserve this government. They deserve something better, and today we have shown that we can win their trust to provide something better."

The nine-to-one margin of support he won from grassroots members will encourage Blair to further prune the influence of trade unions.

The Jerusalem Post

REPUBLICAN members of a U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee delegation charged Israel of violating the 1985 Free Trade Area (FTA) agreement between the two countries and of being ungrateful for U.S. aid at a meeting with Finance Minister Avraham Shohat in Jerusalem on Wednesday.

A source close to the congressional delegation said Republican Congressman Bill Thomas, who chairs the House foreign affairs subcommittee on trade, told Shohat that based on information he had from the administration, Israel is violating the FTA by not abolishing tariffs on agricultural imports.

"You are not allowing us to export oranges, and are taking advantage of the Uruguay Round to avoid your

FTA obligations," Thomas was quoted as saying.

Under the FTA agreement, all goods from both countries are duty-free since January. The agreement with the U.S. however, allows both countries to protect agriculture through non-tariff barriers.

The problem facing both countries is that under the recently concluded GATT trade agreement, all member countries are required to replace non-tariff barriers with tariffs. The US official position is that Israel must conform to both agreements, thereby exposing the country's agricultural sector.

Industry and Trade Ministry Foreign Trade Administration director Zohar Peri said the U.S. position would mean the obliteration of

Israel's agriculture.

Finance Ministry International Division director Ehud Kaufman pointed out that both the new GATT agreement and the FTA make provisions for a separate agricultural policy, and that negotiations with the Americans would preserve the original intent.

Thomas also attacked the trade imbalance in Israel's favour as proof that Israel was not giving U.S. exporters a fair chance.

Republican Congressman Dan Mica of Florida was reported to have said, "I don't understand how you can behave like that. If it wasn't for U.S. aid, your neighbours would have squished you like a bug."

In response to Mica's statement, New York Democratic Congressman Gary Ackerman

noted that Israel's strength was not solely dependent on the U.S., but on the IDF and the defence budget.

"The U.S. interest in Israel is not dependent on oranges," Ackerman said.

Thomas reportedly motioned to Ackerman, implying he should be sitting on the Israeli side, to which Ackerman responded: "If you're trying to imply that I'm not an American, you're not in a position to do so."

U.S. embassy spokesman Richard Scorza said: "We are very pleased with the FTA." He admitted that there is a difference of opinion on the interpretation of the agricultural provisions, but said "it is too early to assess how much of a problem it is, as we still have an adjustment period of one year."